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ADVENTURES IN PROSE

A BOOK OF ESSAYS

BY

HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD

LONDON

HERBERT & DANIEL

21 MADDOX STREET, W.

1911

To

JANE ESDON MALLOCH

THE ARTISAN TO THE INVENTOR

The greater number of these essays have appeared in the Nation or Daily News. One appeared in the Independent Review and one in the Manchester Guardian. I am indebted to the editors of these papers for their courtesy in granting permission to reprint.

H. N. B.

CONTENTS

PART I—ON CATS

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| A POLICY TOWARDS CATS | 3 |
| THE STATE AND THE CAT | 11 |
| ON THE PURRING OF CATS | 18 |
| THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN . | 26 |

PART II—ON BOOKS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| ON A GREAT NOVEL | 39 |
| ON BURNS AND BACCHANALIAN VERSE . | 46 |
| THE COUNTRY HOUSE | 53 |
| THE TRUTH OF MIDNIGHT | 61 |

PART III—ON MUSIC

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| ' CHOPIN VILLA ' | 73 |
| THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC | 82 |
| ON HANDEL'S LARGO | 90 |
| THE SEA IN MUSIC | 98 |
| OF FAUNS AND OBOES | 105 |

CONTENTS

viii

PART IV--ON VARIOUS THEMES

| | PAGE |
|---------------------------------|------|
| THE DECAY OF MELODRAMA . . . | 115 |
| MICROMANIA | 124 |
| LITTLE JIM | 132 |
| THE OKAPI AND THE FINANCIER . . | 140 |
| INSPIRATION OF GRANDFATHERS . . | 148 |
| THE GOATHERDS | 155 |
| THE SPORT OF WAR | 162 |
| AN INDIAN SAINT | 176 |
| ON WATERPROOF SKINS | 180 |
| CONFESSIONS OF A JUROR | 187 |
| ON FADDISTS | 196 |
| ON GREAT FAMILIES | 203 |
| A REMONSTRANCE WITH MORALISTS . | 214 |
| ON CYCLING IN LONDON | 222 |
| THE MODERN PEEP-SHOW | 229 |

PART V—EASTERN SKETCHES

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| OSMAN DIGNA | 241 |
| DOOLIE'S TRAITOR | 252 |
| THE SULTAN'S BIRTHDAY | 263 |
| A BOOK OF MARTYRS | 273 |
| THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE | 281 |
| A LEVANTINE MESSIAH | 292 |

I
ON CATS

A POLICY TOWARDS CATS

A MOST disturbing rumour has recently found its way into the public Press. It is said that efforts are being made to acclimatise in this country a decadent race of cats, which hails from Siam. These creatures, apparently, possess a merit that recommends them to a thoughtless class, which regards the cat as a decorative adjunct to the drawing-room and the boudoir. Their fur is of an exotic softness, and apparently its colour harmonises with the newer art shades. This, in itself, would hardly constitute a serious menace to morality, if this Siamese cat shared the character of other Oriental breeds. The Persian variety, with all its æsthetic allurements, has contrived to preserve the hauteur and the independence which so honourably distinguish the cat among domestic animals. It is, moreover, notoriously unintelligent, and its selfishness knows no compromise. The Siamese cat,

ON CATS

on the other hand, has a pestilent reputation for more social and commonplace qualities. The great Nonconformist organ in which this distressing rumour appeared, describes it as a creature of high intelligence, apt to learn, ready to obey, affectionate to a fault—a dog in cat's clothing.

This beast from Siam is a cat which appeals to all that is base and trivial in human nature. It flatters our desire for domination. It comes at our call ; it follows our footsteps. It respects that foible which besets even a good man in middle age—the passion to be master in his own house. To the child it offers opportunities for patronising and benevolent despotism, which the structure of society so wisely denies him. It departs from that great tradition which has planted the common cat as a symbol of liberty and rebellion in every home. It snatches from the cat the liberal flag of revolt, and makes him instead a tame ensign, waving high the banner of bourgeois ideals. It closes the account of that secular tribute of unrequited love, which the cat tribe has extorted through the ages from mankind, to substitute for it a trivial relation of gratitude and devotion. The regions of

A POLICY TOWARDS CATS

the incomprehensible and the unknown are fast yielding to the impertinent aggressions of modern science. The intellect of the cat has hitherto borne witness to the parochial character of the human mind. Its brain moves in its own mysterious orbits. It has its categories and its syllogisms, but they have escaped the enumerations of Aristotle and the dialectic of Hegel. It is ever with us to protest against the arrogance which confounds the ways of thinking of mankind with the spiritual basis of the universe itself. The mere dog serves no such purpose. The dog even threatens to develop a sense of causality. If the common cat were denied us, we should lose the one phenomenon which reminds us to-day that causality is the besetting heresy of our species, the category of the tailless and the two-legged. The dog comes unreservedly into our world. He accepts the supremacy of our race. He flatters the tribal vanity of man, and admits the dogma which sees in us the apex of creation, the meat-eating centres of a solar system which meekly revolves around our posings and our flesh-pots. Kant saw sublimity in the starry heavens and the moral law. He omitted to mention the

ON CATS

common cat. In all the round of daily life there is no fact which reminds us with such triumphant iteration of the littleness and the impotence of man. We can predict the course of the stars and mark out a path for Orion. But where is the centurion who has ever commanded a tom-cat, the astronomer who predicted the movements of a tabby?

That the cat is an unintelligent animal is a common fallacy, an idol of the tribe. The latent Imperialist who lurks somewhere in the breast even of the best pro-Boer, is convinced that a beast which will not come at command must needs be stupid. He argues much as does Park Lane, when it dubs the agricultural Kaffir 'indolent,' because he has no liking for hard work at a nominal wage in a sunless mine. The common cat is quite aware of the meaning and nature of a word of command. He is pleased to ignore it. Call him at dinner-time to a savoury mess of 'lights,' and he comes with alacrity. I have known a cat which inhabited a London cellar in defiant independence, who would come like any dog in response to a familiar whistle from a house at the other end of the street. She knew that the whistle meant a meal.

A POLICY TOWARDS CATS

No other signal would have brought her from her lair. But tales which attribute to the cat a punctual and periodic devotion must be received with caution. I had in boyhood a cat and a dog who both made a habit of awaiting me on summer afternoons at the garden gate at a stated hour as I returned from school. The dog would receive me with an ecstatic and demonstrative welcome. The cat was always on the spot, and to my naïve egoism it seemed that she, too, wished to greet me in her demure and self-respecting fashion. The noisiness of the dog seemed to irritate her, but that, as I thought, only proved the sterling worth of her more reverent emotion. There she sat, and as I compared the terrier's demeanour with hers, I moralised much as the old lady did in the stalls of the Royalty Theatre, when after watching the prolonged and passionate death agonies of Mrs Patrick Campbell as Cleopatra, she exclaimed, 'What a contrast to the serene home-life of our beloved Queen.' But as the weeks wore on to autumn, I noticed that while the cat still sat on the same warm, dry, gravel-path, she moved each day a little further from the gate. And then I understood that the sun

ON CATS

and not I was the idol of her devotion. I know rather intimately another cat who passionately refuses to be left in a room without human companionship. Where a human being is, there will a fire be also, and a cat which suffers from cold feet—a common ailment—knows the value of a human knee. The cat, in short, like the Jew of the Middle Ages, is in civilisation, but not of it. He has learned to combine flattery with independence, to win protection without allegiance, to draw profit without admitting duties.

So far from despising the cat for his relentless egoism, his elegant selfishness, we ought to honour as in fact we serve him. An Imperial race in search of a *totem* could find no beast more worthy of it scutcheon. He levies tribute without a sense of obligation. His function is to play the superior to a race of human serfs. He is the 'overman' of whom Nietzsche dreamed. His creed is self, and he values the Christian virtues only in his slaves. He has escaped the altruistic contagion which has corrupted the dog, and until the *Daily News* unearthed its Methodist cat from Siam—may it prove a myth—it seemed as though he had defied even this missionary age. One danger alone

A POLICY TOWARDS CATS

besets him. I sometimes tremble at the effect which the life of a great industrial town may have upon the common cat. The note of provincial manners is fidelity to one cat. There is in the country no floating population of homeless cats. Nothing is more pathetic than the degeneracy which want and discomfort can work in the morals of this Imperial race. By an abuse of language we sometimes speak as though the comfortable cat can cry. His cry, to a sensitive ear, is a brusque imperative. The homeless cat does cry. He develops a pitiful gratitude. Starving and emaciated, he will stop in the midst of his first saucer of milk to rub on the donor's legs. He shows, in short, every symptom of civilisation. He becomes conscious of wants, he takes thought for the morrow, he acquires or apes the demeanour of a slave. Let any man in a populous district of London keep open house to cats for a month, and he will realise the magnitude of this evil. An open window, a kindly door, will attract the lapsed and the lost like a magnet, and before long his friends will find their way to his abode, by noting the direction in which the cats of the neighbourhood are moving.

ON CATS

To hesitate in pointing out a remedy would be unworthy the traditions of a Liberal review. Cats must be taxed. A moment's reflection will show that this measure, so far from Imposing a burden on the great Imperial race of cats, will, in fact, press only upon their human slaves and helots. It is, therefore, in complete accordance with the most recent theories of taxation. It is not the cat who will pay. In this way it is probable that the nomad and servile race of cats would rapidly become extinct. The law would assure to every cat a home, and the family which paid his tax for him would at once begin to invest him with a new authority and regard. In no other way can we hope to preserve from corruption the one domestic creature whose character rebukes our arrogant assumptions, and asserts the sacredness of independence in the very bosom of the home.

THE STATE AND THE CAT

I SHOULD be the last to deny Mr Aflalo a merit for his proposition to tax cats. His motives were of the best, and his case was well argued and presented in a manner which appeals to the understanding of the British people. As one who has long laboured with only the meanest measure of success in the same cause, I confess that the reports of Mr Aflalo's speech which appeared in the daily Press filled me with a certain envious admiration. One popular half-penny paper even headed a sympathetic notice of his remarks with the appalling statement in its largest capital letters that there are six million cats in these islands. At length, one felt, the importance of this subject is coming home to the electorate. Mr Aflalo has the ear of the country. And yet I feel that his very success demands a protest. To the sensitive mind there is something inexpressibly shocking in the

ON CATS

idea of levying a tax on cats. It implies, as he states it, an irreverence, an absence of the religious sense which deserves to be stigmatised in the strongest terms. We tax male servants, and some States have levied an impost on Jews. But to class cats in the same category is surely the work of a rude and irreflective mind. I would not be discourteous to Mr Aflalo; but I feel very strongly that he has suffered from his long and honourable association with the Zoological Gardens. I have never known lions or tigers intimately, but I can conceive that they might have just such an effect upon the human mind as we see in Mr Aflalo. He has done much to alleviate the lot of this oppressed class. But when he transfers his benevolence to cats he should remember that he is dealing with a free and, indeed, with an Imperial race. The dog has been called the friend of man, and he is a creature of so servile a temperament that I can conceive that he would even glory in the title. He is obedient, he is faithful, he is capable of gratitude—that pillar of all the virtues in a slave morality. But what cat was ever grateful? To tax him is to drag him into the wheels of our social system. One

THE STATE AND THE CAT

might as well propose a tax upon ancestral ghosts.

The parallel which Mr Aflalo draws from the dog tax is entirely fallacious. The dog is in every sense of the word a member of society. He benefits from what we call good government. He thrives under a liberal constitution as he languishes under a tyranny. It is proper that he should pay his share of the burdens which support the Police, the Established Church, and the Navy which preserves us from infidel aggression. For of all these things he shares the benefit. One has only to consider his position under Turkish rule to realise the force of this reasoning. He leads under the Crescent the life of a pariah and an outcast, more pitiable even than the haunted existence of the Christian peasant. But with the disappearance of the Ottoman yoke his lot grows immediately tolerable. He is happy in Servia, prosperous in Greece, and even in Bulgaria, where freedom is scarce a generation old, he is not to be pitied. John Wesley said that he would give very little for the religion of the man whose dog was not the better for it. It is proper, then, that the dog should be taxed, and, indeed, if he

ON CATS

were also called upon to contribute his share of the tithes, and even to pay a forced quota of the Additional Curates' Fund, the reform would have justice behind it. But with cats it is quite otherwise. This sublime and masterful race owes nothing to civilisation and disdains religion. I have known many Mohamedan cats, and I could detect no trace of degradation in their manners. They do not suffer where women and dogs succumb. Unlike the dog, they have known how to subdue the fiercest bashi-bazouks and the most fanatical ulema. They have nothing to gain from Christian missions, or even from the strictest enforcement of the Treaty of Berlin. They have a majesty, a self-sufficiency which owes nothing to written constitutions and thrives amid the most appalling social disorders.

There is, however, a condition under which I am ready to subscribe to M. Aflalo's scheme. Let him propose, instead of a tax on cats, a tax upon the owners of cats, and I am convinced that he has no opposition to fear; for the owners of cats are the meek of the earth, a class ripe for oppression and incapable of a spirited resistance. The man who will endure the tyranny of a cat.

THE STATE AND THE CAT

will bend to any tax. For it is characteristic of the cat that it never retains for any length of time even a pretence of respect for its owner. Domesticity is fatal to happy relations with a cat. I have some friends among cats, but they are all of them acquaintances I have made in the open air, casual attachments of the streets, which imply no servile obligation on my side. There is one, an *habitué* of the Square garden in front of my house, which even comes at my call and will walk at my side for half an hour at a stretch. She has never had from me so much as a saucer of milk, and I have wisely refrained from admitting her under my roof. We preserve in consequence a certain mutual esteem. I have given her no right to command me, and, wearied of the humiliations to which my own cats subject me, I gladly seek her society. She cannot call upon me to open the door for her at unseasonable moments ; she cannot summon me to accomodate her kittens in my bed ; she does not stare with a cold look of remonstrance when I call her ; she does not ' cut ' me if I meet her on my doorstep. But all these things and more she does to her own chartered and privileged

ON CATS

possessor. The man who will endure such treatment is an apt subject of taxation. Indeed, if Governments should once realise what a treasure there is in the loyalty and devotion of cat owners, I tremble for human liberty. There is no imposition which these men would not endure, no humiliation against which they would rebel.

I would add, however, this rider to Mr Aflalo's proposal. While I levied an annual impost on the owners of cats, I would extirpate those cats which cannot find an owner. For there is a bastard and incompetent race of cat which has lost the art of subjugating human beings. The cat which cannot compel some citizen to provide for its wants has assuredly no title to survive. I would confer upon every cat which has found a vassal some suitable mark of its dignity—it is difficult perhaps to devise anything more convenient than a collar, although I admit that in the case of the dog the collar has come to be regarded as a badge of servitude. I would empower the police to arrest any cat found at large without this token of respectability. The thing is done already in several German cities, and our tardiness in adopting it only proves how far

THE STATE AND THE CAT

we lag behind the Continent in some of the details of civilisation.

For if there is no existence more completely happy than that of the domestic cat which has found a family over which to tyrannise, there is no type of misery so abject or complete as that of the stray. Leading a haunted life between dogs and boys, starving, diseased, and exposed without shelter to rain and to cold, it bears the burden of an existence which the most humane would be the first to terminate. The only method of dealing with its case, is to authorise the police to destroy, painlessly and betimes, all ownerless cats, and that will only be possible under the same system of registration and taxation which prevails in regard to dogs. Few acts of mercy would be more profitable, for, as Mr Aflalo's statistics show, even allowing for the inevitable diminution in the number of cats which a tax would bring about, there are quite enough of them to produce a revenue which no Chancellor need despise.

ON THE PURRING OF CATS

SOCIETY has hitherto paid a slavish and unimaginative deference to the man who makes discoveries. It rejoices in conquering the kingdoms of mystery, as it rejoices in enslaving some free anarchy which had made liberty impregnable among Himalayan peaks. It delights to card out the stars and classify the tangled glories of the Milky Way. It makes holiday when a dead okapi, trussed and skinned by some Imperial taxidermist, is dragged from the secrecy of an African underwood. Its progress is the ripping of veils, and the removal of landmarks.

None but a vandal would help to set in motion this curiosity which needs no spur. The wise man goes delicately, lest he should put a question unawares. But I have a problem which may be stated without risk.

It imperils no mystery, and lays the train for no discovery. The circle can be

ON THE PURRING OF CATS

squared within the limits of a repeating decimal. But this question admits of no more or less. Only Yes or No will answer it, and Yes and No are equally beyond the range of human knowledge.

The riddle is merely this, Does a cat purr in solitude?

Turn it as you will there is no road to a straight answer. You will never know how the cat that is dearest to you comports herself in your absence, and lest you should dream of stealing a Polonius march on her privacy from behind the arras, let me point out in advance that the experiment would be worthless. You could not elude her instincts. She might, indeed, disdain to notice you, or to leave her convenient seat before the fire to enjoy the pleasure of detecting you (as a vulgarian of a dog would certainly do). But if your presence pleased her, then, if it was her will, she would purr.

For my part, I decline to spy upon my cats. I rejoice that the problem should remain unsolved. I want no scientific certainty, and yet I cling to my opinion. I would defend it on the body of anyone who would deny it, not because I can

ON CATS

prove it, but because I believe it. I am convinced that no cat ever purred in solitude, and if she did, I am certain that in her dream she conceived herself to be seated in comfort on the chest of some prostrate man, or esconced amid a heap of kittens on the cosiest of kitchen chairs.

It is my will to think thus, as it was the will of a Spanish Knight-errant to believe in the authenticity of the fragment of bone whose sanctity he would prove with lance and broad-sword. When I pile up my cats in a soft pyramid of fur before going to bed for the night, I am convinced that behind closed doors amid the darkness, they purr loudly and happily to one another, as Coleridge's brook sang its 'quiet tune,' to the sleeping woods.

I am equally certain that when one of them settles at the busiest hour of the day exactly on my diaphragm, it purrs, not with the reflex action of a self-centred automaton, but with the conscious enthusiasm of a social creature which sings to me its hymn of praise.

The opposite school of thought has no doubt its plausible analogies and its specious prejudices. From Descartes downwards it

ON THE PURRING OF CATS

has great names on its side. It will tell you that a cat purrs when it comes within range of a sufficiently warm fire as mechanically as Memnon's statue gave forth its music in the solitudes of the desert when the first morning ray of the Egyptian sun touched its conscious marble. It will tell you that a cat purrs as a kettle sings—when the thermometer shows the necessary temperature.

As for this sect, I would send it packing to the schools, and condemn it to a course of Kant and T. H. Green and Mr Haldane. Has it any knowledge of a cat's purr, which did not caress some conscious mind? Will the sect produce a purr which was not heard? And if the purr was heard, may I not conclude that the presence of the hearer was at least a factor in the set of causes which produced it? There is no purr without an ear, and may I not conclude, if I please, that the purr was directed expressly to the ear? In plain words, my contention is that purring is an essentially social noise.

I will not say that purring is exactly an expression of gratitude or even precisely a symbol of kindness. The cat in this age of hypocrisy and servility is above gratitude.

ON CATS

It is only the most demoralised of strays who will ever demean herself to thank you. A cat would purr on your chest while you shivered in an ague, provided that your shaking did not disturb her overmuch. But a social noise it is, none the less. It expresses a contentment which you are expected to recognise, if not to share. It is a summons to mutual delights, a declaration, doubtless as selfish as all such declarations usually are, that all's right with the world. But even selfishness is a social vice. I once knew a Mohamedan saint who declared that all the evil in the world might be summed up in the sentence, 'I am satisfied, you are hungry.' The cat does not say, 'I am warm, you are cold.' But assuredly she does say, 'I am warm, rejoice in my content.'

It is not an idle speculation, this question whether cats purr in solitude. ~~It~~ It is the touchstone to all understanding of the cat. This royal animal, this anarch who has withstood the philistinism of centuries of kitchen life, has puzzled tradition and made proverbial wisdom foolish.

There are no mysteries in the dog; he bows to our superiority, and in the egoism.

ON THE PURRING OF CATS

of our two legs we understand his deference. But the cat, because she visibly despised us, we have set down as an inferior intelligence, and built up a legend around her which teaches that her attachment is not to persons, but to places. Perhaps it is, when the persons have not learned to respect her. Balzac knew the truth when he wrote his romance about the leopardess of the Egyptian desert, who lived with one of Napoleon's veterans an idyllic life in a lonely cave—a life which ended only when, in a mad fit of jealousy, she tried to kill the man whom she had loved. A cat must be loved with delicacy and reserve, as one would love a mistress.

She is exacting in her etiquette ; she has her taste in tones of voice ; she must be studied and obeyed ; she will not adapt herself to you or ape your fancies. But if you will accept the conditions of the partnership, she will value your homage, and recognise your devotion. She will come to you, after an absence, with that crooning noise of tenderness which she usually reserves for her kittens. I have a cat who went with me once through all the wizardries of a train journey, when the landscape flew

ON CATS

past the window and the queer little room rocked unmeaningly like some witch's kitchen. It ended in Manchester, and for many a day she would insist on following me from the door when I went out, through gardens and along wall-tops. She would watch me mount the electric car, and then as the hours went on, wait for my return at the street corner, and run to me as I descended again, with a little cry of joy—so fearful was she lest I meant to abandon her. We were once separated for a weary term of six long months. Ever since that separation she cries if a bag or a portmanteau is brought out of the box-room. If I leave the house carrying a parcel which she thinks large enough to portend a lengthy absence, she will follow me down the street, until the sight of a dog compels her to reflect that her own life is of more import than my company. She certainly prefers her human servitors to their comfortable habitations. Of her, at least, I will not believe that she has ever purred alone.

Most musical of sounds, most cordial of consolations, a solace for the lonely pillow, a song for euthanasia, the cat has evolved it careless of our ignorance and our misunder-

ON THE PURRING OF CATS

standings. For the wise who know her, it is a communion of linked spirits. For the philistine let it be a non-social phenomenon, a reflex function. But whatever else it be, it is at least a riddle, and the centre of a mystery which science will never pierce. The smuggest of suburban hearthrugs is a crossroads between Delphi and Thebes, and the homeliest of tabbies a sphinx who defies you, as she purrs, to answer her simple question—whether a cat has ever purred alone.

THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN

WITH a musical note, that is something between a purr and a call, the black cat has leaped on to the table before me. It is a question which I am never tired of pondering how far that particular cry is a conscious effort of her will. She makes it as she jumps towards me, and it seems to be the mere symbol of her motion in the world of sound. It is the velvet creaking of her body. It is the noise that emanates from the sinuous movement of her back and the sure adjustments of her graceful and expressive limbs. She has walked round the table with the indirectness and irrelevance that is half the charm of cats. Presently she thrusts a wet nose against my chin with a fierce caress. And then she turns to a little vase of violets. She sniffs at it, and her first sensation is one of revolt from the very excess of the stimulus. But she

THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN

returns. She smells the fragrance again and yet again. Now, with a gesture of gratitude and pleasure, she arches her back and rubs against the vase and the leaves, as though to render back to the violets by the pressure of her soft hair and her voluptuous body something of the pleasure she has received. Mysterious little sybarite, is it a disinterested æsthetic joy that stirs the tiny brain behind her yellow eyes? But she has anticipated the question. I look again at the delicate æsthete. A four-footed beast with sharp, white teeth and a carmine mouth is chewing the flowers, persuaded that anything which smells so good must needs be nice to eat. I whistle to her. She has a well-defined taste in music. Low notes do not affect her. But to high and piercing strains she responds at once. Sing to her, as best you may, the bird's call to Siegfried, and at once she will stand up. At first she is startled. Then she purrs. She settles down before you, and with an outstretched paw, as graceful as the shoulder of a girl by Greuze, she touches your lips. At length she answers, as she answered the violets, by pressing her elegant body against your cheek. In what did her

ON CATS

pleasure differ from yours? To the sequence of sounds she seems to be indifferent. She betrays no distress if you stop mid-way in an uncompleted phrase. Yet something it certainly means for her. Her emotions are stimulated, her senses are flattered.

On the table before me, beside the black cat and the vase of violets, lies 'Art's Enigma.' The protentious title takes form before my eyes. It is not a sphinx. It is nothing alarming or mythological. It is simply a furry little beast which seems, in some dim way, because she has senses and sex, to be capable of æsthetic pleasures. What is Art? Mr Jameson, in this volume of essays which has just come from the Bodley Head, is busied on a plane of high seriousness with this inflated question. He attempts to settle it, by a process of Platonic definition as though biology were an unknown study, and the instincts of animals and savages a field too wild for the steps of a cultured man. He sets out in search of the common element of all the arts, and he finds it, partly in formalism, and partly in bad psychology. Perhaps there is something common to all the arts. Perhaps there is Art, with a capital A and a pattern laid up

THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN

in Heaven. But, when at last we have chased the thin abstraction, forced her to leave her robe in one chamber, her voice in another, and her skeleton in a third, what is there in the thin ghost which at last accepts our analytic embrace? One might as well ask, What is Science? and proceed to search for a common definition which would enfold at once the Sixth Book of Euclid and *The Origin of Species*. Science has, indeed, a unity. Physics must be read with biology, and biology with chemistry and astronomy, if you would frame a notion of an ordered and reasonable Universe. But art is a pleasant estate of many separate meadows. You may realise Ibsen without concerning yourself with the Post-Impressionists. You may be colour-blind, and yet have a nice ear for the diatonic scale. It is a pure assumption that any general definition which is worth the framing, any speculation which is worth pursuing, shall apply at once to *Clayhanger* and St Paul's, to *The Wild Duck* and Whistler's *Mother*. Why, in the name of common-sense, should one law bind us when we construct a play and dance a gavotte? What is there in common between the telling of a story and the record

ON CATS

of an impression in greys and reds seen on the Thames at sunset? We have made 'art's enigma' simply by our perverse assumption that there is Art at all. There is a manner of telling stories. There is a way of writing songs. One may generalise about cathedrals. There is much that an intelligent man may say of symphonies. But what is Art? Is it anything at all?

This somewhat irritable question is the only articulate remark which Mr Jameson's discursive volume has stirred in me. But it is none the less a question which, precisely because it is so elementary, is emphatically worth the putting. In all his rambling talk about Whistler and Ruskin and Ibsen and Irving, Mr Jameson has a definite tendency to enforce, and a positive criterion to apply. He starts with the most formal of all the arts, analyses the pleasure of music indifferently well, and then proceeds to apply the definition of art which he has drawn from tunes to Ibsen and some others. His tendency is anti-rational and impressionist. It serves him well in some acute and sensible remarks about acting and painting. It is quite easy, when you have drawn a definition from the more sensuous arts, to turn

THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN

and rend Ibsen for attempting a criticism of life in his plays. One need not pause to explain how totally Mr Jameson has failed to understand even the more obvious things in the simpler works of Ibsen. What really interested me was the collapse of the impressionist theory, when Mr Jameson, who certainly is a competent connoisseur, turned to discourse of architecture.

A theory of æsthetics, which treats every work of 'art' as an impression, drives out the reason with knotted cords from the Temple, and erects in its place a sub-conscious 'faculty' of imagination, may dogmatise plausibly about painting and poetry and even about music. It condemns what does not suit its canons. It thrusts out programme music and problem plays and novels with a moral. Enough is left to serve it for plausible illustrations. It is still possible to argue that we take our æsthetic pleasures as the black cat smelt the violets, that we record 'impressions' and receive them, and that the intellect is more or less dormant in the process. But if Art is One (pardon the capitals) the whole theory goes to pieces on the dome of St Paul's. Mr Jameson has not been able to repress his

ON CATS

sound technical knowledge. He has written a very readable chapter illustrated by many diagrams to prove that renaissance architecture is bad art. The case is perfectly simple and clear. Schlegel said that architecture is frozen music. St Paul's, as it happens, is a frigid and calculated lie. The exterior is a false boast which the interior fails to substantiate. The great Dome which dominates London with its secular mendacity is not a dome at all. It is a confection, a piece of millinery draped around a cone. The upper storey of the Cathedral's wall is a lie to hide the buttresses. The lintels above the sham pilasters and the Corinthian capitals are falsehoods to belie the arches. The whole effect, in short, is one of decoration which has no reasonable relation to structure. Instead of being, as a Gothic cathedral is, an⁶ honest rendering of strains and weights and stresses, St Paul's is an ornamented surface which hides its mechanical problems. The indictment is perfectly familiar, and it has caused generations of architects to shake their heads, while generations of plain men continued to enjoy their simple pleasures of sight. The dome, after all, still dominates London. It is still

THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN

a triumphant artifice above the Thames. The pilasters and the arches in all their rhythmical unreason are a symmetrical pattern which delights the eye. There is balance and harmony, ornament and strength. We receive our 'impression,' and what care we that Wren hid his bastard buttresses, or bound the dome with a chain, or sustained it on a cone? Does that impair our emotional satisfaction? Do we feel the less that the puny hand of man has triumphed over weights and masses, erected its imperishable patterns in mid-air, and flouted gravitation with a firmament of stone? Why should we apply to pediments and colonnades any other criteria than we apply to mural paintings or sculptured ornaments? They are decorations which please the eyes. If art is 'impressionism,' an emotional unity devised by the 'imagination,' what business has the understanding to unmask the stony lies of Sir Christopher Wren? As well complain that paintings which look like outline and light are in reality nothing but colour.

Mr Jameson and the Impressionist school, it seems to me, must make their choice. If they mean to banish reason, they must not

ON CATS

criticise the dome of St Paul's. It looks exactly like a dome. We have no business to know that it is not a globular arch. Or else they must surrender Art and its Unity, and concede that the understanding has a function in architecture, which they will not allow to it in music and painting. For our part we refuse to dogmatise. 'Impressions,' whatever they may mean, are relative to the alertness of the perceiving mind. If Wren was building to please cultivated architects, he made a colossal miscalculation. If he meant to overawe the generations of simple men and women who have worshipped amid the stone generals and the marble admirals, shopped around the Churchyard, and gazed at his dome from bridges of which he had not dreamed, then, indeed, he builded well. The artist must choose between the black cat and her master. And the master is not content to receive an impression. He gives to the thing which pleases him an independent life. He conceives the cathedral as an organic and substantial creation. It pains him to know that there is a lie in its stones. The black cat, as I write, has overturned the vase of violets. She still coquets around.

THE BLACK CAT AND CHRISTOPHER WREN

them, and brushes against them, and smells them. They are for her a purple smell. As well let them lie prone and starving for water. Her master gathers them up and restores the normal laws of their existence. For him they are living things.

II
ON BOOKS

ON A GREAT NOVEL

THE letters of Dostoievsky have just been published in a French edition. They have brought the critics out of their dens, the iconoclasts of gracious images, the eaters of reputations, the parasites who destroy the dead by whom they live.

One member of the tribe, a nameless detractor, the son, I am sure, of long lines of anonymous ancestors, has just seized the occasion to deny the greatness and genius of Dostoievsky. What he gleans from the letters is for me an irrelevant impertinence. To write the biographies of literary men is in itself an outrage ; let us have the lives of men of action, but why in the name of mercy should we be told how often Dostoievsky failed to pay his debts and begged a rouble from a friend ? One might as well dig up the Troad to find Helen's butcher's bills, or discuss the morals of Botticelli's model.

ON BOOKS

I am not concerned to defend the personal character of this supreme artist. The personality of Cæsar or Napoleon matters to the world. The personality of an artist is merely one of the many conditions, like his paper and his pens, and the quality of the wine he drank, which went to make up his work. But when the fellow goes on to declare that the author of *Crime and Punishment* was simply a writer of ephemeral serial stories, neither greater nor less than Eugène Sue, my blood boils within me.

For to me that amazing book, with all its obvious faults, is one of the few immortal novels of the world. I know no test which I would not apply to it. What book is more defiantly false, what book is more splendidly true? What tale is more arresting, what collection of characters more opulent? It has laughter and tears, thought and pathos, stuff enough to furnish forth a whole circulating library of contemporary novelists. If personal testimony means anything in criticism, I will add this detail—that, though I have read the book only once, and that ten years ago, and in a positively illiterate translation, I remember every scene and every person as vividly as .

ON A GREAT NOVEL

one remembers the wilder nightmares of one's childhood.

There is an obvious reason why Dostoievsky has fared ill at the hands of the professional critic. The literary critic is still, for the most part, in a stage of mental development which corresponds to the Linnæan phase in Botany. His happiness is to classify.

Now Dostoievsky, from the standpoint of the pedant, seems to be a mule, a hybrid, a rebellious specimen, who straddles over several genera and species, and cannot be neatly pinned on any particular board. What, they say, are you to make of a man who was by turns realist and romantic, who wrote on occasion like a wilder Dickens, only to turn the page and become a more sombre Gorky? On the whole the critics, to do them justice, are agreed to place him among the romantics. His theme is the murder of a usurious old woman in a poor quarter of St Petersburg. It is a theme for a realist, and any good realist would have shown how the average degraded thief came to do it from the usual sordid motives. Dostoievsky takes for his thief a young student of law, of a sympathetic and sensitive

character, and when he has given already half a dozen rather unconvincing reasons why he should have committed the theft, he adds a seventh—that Raskolnikoff had anticipated Nietzsche, and held that the ‘over-man’ is above morality, and rightly claims in view of his superiority the privilege of preying on his neighbours. His heroine, Sonia, is a courtesan, but though she is a convincing and probable character, he had to make her the exception in her class, a creature of exquisite and paradoxical purity, absolutely unsullied by the life she led. Even Hugo, arch-romantic though he was, was less daring when he came to write of Fantine. He has invented such an examining magistrate as never was on land or sea, a Sherlock Holmes who had studied psychology, and knew as much about the human heart as that romantic hero did about cigar ashes.

But on the other side of the account, the critics will say: What could be more ‘realistic’ than the exquisitely humorous yet faithful picture of Sonia’s father, the drunken official? Is there in all literature drunken dialogue more brilliant and yet more probable? The whole of the slum life of St

ON A GREAT NOVEL

Petersburg in which this family moves—the streets, the eating-houses, and, above all, the funeral—could Gorky himself have painted it more accurately, and with less flinching? And so they conclude that this book, because it belongs to no one class, is the product of a disordered brain, and stands outside literature, because it defies their classification.

The plain fact is that Dostoievsky was the purest and most inveterate romantic who ever wrote a word, and deserves the name of realist about as much as Sir Walter Scott or Dumas the Elder. It is a monstrous superstition, that because a man can see detail clearly and describe it faithfully, he is therefore a realist. Was Homer a realist, because he could describe Achilles' shield? Were the English pre-Raphaelites realists, because they painted in their details with a fantastic and meticulous fidelity? Nor does a preference for sordid settings, and a certain ruthlessness in handling ugly themes, make an artist a realist. There is ugliness enough in *Les Misérables*, yet Hugo was a sheer romantic.

'Verily,' said the Caliph, 'this is an extraordinary occurrence, and worthy to be

recorded in a book.' So runs the stock phrase with which that magical stitcher of tales, the supreme artist who compiled the *Arabian Nights*, loves to conclude a story. That is the primitive, the natural attitude, and that is the attitude of all romance. It seeks the extraordinary occurrence, the theme for wonder and admiration, the exceptional, the heroic, the ideally beautiful,—the black tulip, and the singing swan. There is no single 'romantic school'; there are endless schools and every sort of technique; it is the temperament, the attitude towards life and society which makes the romantic. He may amuse himself with pure grotesques and gargoyles and miracles as Poe did. He may work in the strange past as Scott and Dumas did. He may write with a purpose as Dickens and Hugo, and sometimes Dostoievsky did. He may use sheer moral ugliness as his material, as Robert Louis Stevenson often did. But if his delight is the rare, the exceptional man, he is a romantic. Some seek the rare man in the hero and the paragon, others in the criminal and the mentally diseased. The first method was Hugo's, the second was Dostoievsky's. In either case the trend is

ON A GREAT NOVEL

romantic. The mad King Lear is as much a romantic figure as the heroic Coriolanus, and mental pathology is as familiar a ground of the romantic as mythology itself.

The attitude of the realist towards the 'extraordinary occurrence,' which the Arab Caliph thought, on that ground alone, worthy to be recorded in a book, is that on this ground alone it is a subject of small importance and mediocre interest. Precisely in so far as a thing is really abnormal and exceptional and unusual, precisely in so far as it is unworthy of the attention of a mature and serious mind. The pottering village 'naturalist' thinks that he is serving science by collecting two-headed chickens and preserving them in spirits of wine. The genuine scientist knows that the real problem, the real wonder is the one-headed chicken, and he will turn aside to look at the monster only if he thinks that he may find in it a clue to the mystery of the normal. The realist studies man as a product of conditions and social phenomenon. The romantic regards him as a portent and a miracle in the world.

ON BURNS AND BACCHANALIAN VERSE

THERE is a day in the calendar when the earth draws nearest to the sun. There is also the day of All Souls, when the dead approach the living. There is another day when a whole race takes to the saying of Black Masses, and gives itself to a species of cosmic revolt. That day is to-day, the birthday of Robert Burns, when Bacchanalian feasts are a matter of convention, and decorum prescribes that the minister himself shall preside at a carousal in honour of Rantin' Robin, who ridiculed the Kirk and sang the Deil, and gave to the genius of the most Puritan people in Europe its highest expression in terms of sheer devilment and rebellion.

I see the reader at these words take down his well-thumbed Burns. He opens it at the first page, and there he finds, as generations before him have found, as, indeed, he was

ON BURNS AND BACCHANALIAN VERSE

meant to find, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. I acknowledge its power. It has the truth of realism, and the sure touch of unforced sentiment.

And yet to me it seems, as pure literature, one of the least considerable of Burns' achievements. Its opening stanzas are an undisguised echo of Gray's *Elegy*. Two of its happiest lines are quotations from Pope. Its close is sheer banality. Its power over the Scottish heart lies in five stanzas only, stanzas, indeed, of real dignity and felicity, which describe the cotter's evening devotions. But even in these, the words that linger in the ear, the lines which have become the current tags of daily speech, are Bible rather than Burns. The poem, to my thinking, shows none of the impetuosity and power of imagination, none of the visual magic which make the greatness of *Tam o' Shanter*, and little of the emotional force which gives to the simplest lyrics the appeal of genius. It is the sentiment, rather than the craftsmanship, which has made it a classic.

It is, indeed, the most curious and significant fact about the Scottish race, that, despite its intense loyalty to religion and its pre-occupation with theology, it has produced

ON BOOKS

no great devotional literature. Scotland has been governed by religion, fought for religion, starved and suffered and died for religion, above all argued for religion, but the breath of song was absent from her prayers. English literature, from Bunyan and Sir Thomas Browne, through Law and Jeremy Taylor to Newman, from Spenser to Milton and from Milton to Cowper, has blended its sweetest music with its devotions.

There is no Scot among these names. A lack so complete cannot be accidental. There are, indeed, books enough about religion. The long summer holidays of my childhood spent among elderly relatives in an Ayrshire manse, where only a forbidding bookcase of religious works in gloomy bindings was open on the Sabbath day, taught me all the resources of terror and subtlety which lie buried in the religious literature of Scotland. The grace, the humanity, and the mysticism of the English writers are absent from these arid volumes. And the fact which emerges for my memory from those tiers of black volumes is that the Scottish mind—the mind, at least, of the Lowland Scot—is not religious at all. Its understanding has been fettered, indeed, by

ON BURNS AND BACCHANALIAN VERSE

a rigidly logical theology. It has been formed on the Shorter Catechism, nourished on the Psalms, and found its pleasure in pursuing the premises of its creed to their last conclusions. But to religious emotion, to the awe and tenderness of devotion, the Scottish mind has never given expression.

The unhappy case of the Lowland Scot was this, that while he believed sincerely in religion, he felt none of its consolations ; while his intellect assented, his heart was unmoved. He remained in his intimate interior a pagan, whose brain had been paralysed by the Westminster Confession. The result was that his unregenerate cravings assumed the character of a daring and exciting rebellion. His pleasant vices were all deliberate sins. His drinking had the significance of an inverted act of devotion. When he did not live to the glory of God he lived quite consciously to the defiance of God. Had he believed less he would have been a natural, sensual man. Had he felt more he would have been a saint.

That is for me the explanation of the extraordinary power and attraction of Burns' Bacchanalian verse. An African savage gets drunk on Hamburg spirits because he is

ON BOOKS

so nearly a beast. Burns became the singer of revelry, because revelry was for him a spiritual act. It was a defiance, a challenge to heaven and earth, a sort of blasphemy.

There is a current saying that the blasphemer usually dies crying for mercy. I doubt its literal truth. If it is true at all, it only means that the bewildered mind reverts at death to the memories of childhood. One remembers Godwin's cold rebuke to his dying wife when she told him that she saw the heavens opened—'My dear, you mean that your physical sensations are somewhat easier.' But the libel has a psychological truth. For after all, the whole attraction of blasphemy would be gone, if one did not in one's heart believe. In that Scottish manse where I spent my childhood, I had a playmate who was plagued with the same mad instinct of rebellion. He was fascinated by the idea of the unpardonable sin, which preyed on his imagination, until it became a romantic and alluring obsession. And one winter evening he clambered on to a chair in our nursery, and solemnly and deliberately blasphemed the Holy Ghost. He was found at nightfall, sobbing his heart out, because he had challenged the wrath of

ON BURNS AND BACCHANALIAN VERSE

God. I think I detect something of this same spirit in Robert Burns. His sensuality is not animal, because it is a deliberate revolt against all the laws and powers of the universe. He did with naïveté, and in the traditional Scottish way, what Byron did after him with supreme self-consciousness, when he posed and attitudinised before his Creator.

There is another race, closely akin to the Lowland Scots, which exhibits the same perverse psychology. They also were martyred and dragooned for religion; they also justified their faith in serried tomes of controversial theology. Yet I doubt whether the Dutch, though they have shown the same heroism and tenacity in their religion, and the same absorption in dogmatic theology, were really any more religious than the Scots. Their genius has left its supreme record of itself not on the printed page, but on canvas. You will find in a Dutch gallery drinking scenes and butchers' shops, homely kitchens and rich interiors, seascapes and landscapes, battles and carousals. But of religious feeling there is scarcely a trace. What there is, is confined to the work of minor painters who denationalised themselves by copying Italian models.

There is, it is true, one supremely great expression of religious emotion in the Dutch language—in Spinoza's recently discovered tractate *De Deo et homine et ejus voluptate*. Its author was a Portuguese Jew.

When I look into the faces of the laughing cavaliers and jolly arquebusiers of Franz Hals, I feel that the secret of his dash and diablerie, is also the secret of Robert Burns. He worked under the shadow of the Oude Kerk at Haarlem, and he believed every word which he heard from its marvellously ornate pulpit. He went out from the Nacht-maal and got gloriously drunk, and then with his fingers tingling with defiance, he painted his canvasses with a bravura which recalls *Tam o' Shanter* or the *Jolly Beggars*.

There is a poetry of the flesh and the devil which is simple and naïve, and rarely attains a high order of power or imagination. It flourishes among the races which do not believe that there is anything really reprehensible in the flesh and the devil. It is only in Puritan and Protestant lands that the same tendency attains to genius, for only in them does it possess a spiritual and cosmic significance

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

ACCIDENT, which is often the shrewdest of literary critics, played a happy trick the other evening with the books which were lying about upon my table. Mr Galsworthy's *Country House* lay by chance on top of Jane Austen's *Emma*, and as I put them back into their places on the shelves, their characters mingled for a moment in a sort of unearthly ballet. Mr Woodhouse, I think, must have caught sight of the hard upright figure of Squire Pendyce. He cringed perceptibly, and shivered, as though some moral draught had blown upon him from a rashly opened window. He dived hastily into the book-case, and I heard him calling plaintively for 'a little thin gruel, not too thin, but just thin enough.' I could see Emma as she caught a glimpse of the improper Mrs Bellew; she drew in her skirts, turned a stiff back, and looked round to make sure that poor little Harriet was safe from contamination. The

ON BOOKS

Rev. Mr Elton stared incredulous at the sight of the Rector in his cricketing flannels, and when Mr Knightley, in all the pride of his priggish superiority, began to lecture the 'stoic' Pendyce upon the folly of racing and gambling, I closed the two books with a bang, and placed them on widely separated shelves, with a stout mantlepiece and a broad fireplace between them.

I have witnessed in my time awkward encounters at a masked ball. But the pathos of this scene in my bookcase was that Jane Austen's people knew very well that Mr Galsworthy's people were their lineal descendants. The same old houses stand in the same wooded parks. The same comfortable class leads an equally idle life, in an equally meaningless way. There has been no infusion of alien blood, no political revolution, no foreign conquest. And yet in three generations the whole spirit and atmosphere of the English country house has changed.

The contrast, you will say, is really between Mr Galsworthy and Miss Austen, and not at all in the societies which they depict. For my part, I think so well of them both that I am prepared to resist this

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

insinuation to the uttermost. Certainly there were never two artists so flagrantly unlike in their methods and their outlook on the world. Jane Austen accepted her country house as a sort of eternal and immutable fact, the pattern of respectability and elegance, laid up in Heaven from the foundation of the world. She would as soon have joined Godwin and turned Atheist as have criticised it. She wrote from within the charmed circle. Mr Galsworthy, on the other hand, is a rebel. He sees with irony, and describes with malice. Where Jane Austen criticises only the foibles of persons, he is busy in exposing the weaknesses of a caste. But, with all their differences, the two methods result in two pictures which can be brought together in the mind. Jane Austen has after all no interest in eccentricity, no sense for any defiant individuality ; her characters are all the product of a close and continuous social intercourse, the creation of a certain environment. She delights to refine among them, but the more she distinguishes and discriminates the better does she succeed in describing a certain common atmosphere. Mr Galsworthy lacks altogether her meticulous instinct for detail.

ON BOOKS

It is the type and not the individual whom he describes. But in their several ways, they do none the less arrive at an equally objective presentment of two societies.

The contrast is so sharp that one seeks almost in vain for any point of identity. One can uproot Mr Woodhouse from his century with a sharp pull, and just succeed in fitting him into a modern environment. The puzzled foolish old gentleman, with his innocence and his valetudinarianism, his hatred of change, his dread of fresh air, his shrinking Conservatism, might manage to survive in some quiet suburb of a small provincial town, in a society of retired tradesmen. The 'country house' would kill him in six months. It is even harder to conceive an environment which would tolerate the Knightleys—and the Knightleys, with their stiff principles, formal speech, well-stored minds, and didactic habits, recur in every volume of Jane Austen. There is certainly no modern club which would deny itself the pleasure of blackballing them. And, as for poor little Harriet, I shrink in dismay from the task of finding her a situation. Gentle, sentimental, sedentary, with her elaborate and expressive habit of speech, .

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

I can conceive no social stratum which would treat her with the tenderness she deserved. I see her storing up, in her private casket, the bit of sticking-plaster which had once rested on Mr Elton's finger, together with a stump of the pencil he had used, and labelling them, in her foolish innocence, 'most precious treasures.' The companion picture in the *Country House* is the young Miss Pendyce, brisk, healthy, elementary in 'mind, bending with her lover over the hock of her hunter, and debating with him whether it should be 'fired.' I can imagine Miss Pendyce perfectly happy among a Red Indian tribe, or leading a 'rippin' and congenial existence among Pathans or Albanians. But, shut up with her grandmothers in a country house of 1807, she would either have moped and died, or run away in despair with the stable-boy.

The world of Jane Austen's country house was certainly not an intellectual or a serious society. It was not speculative; it never debated large issues; it was busy simply in the task of perpetuating itself by prudent marriages and keeping itself alive by elegant recreations. But, on the average, I think its brain was rather more intricately con-

ON BOOKS

voluted than the brain of Mr Galsworthy's Manor. 'Accomplishments' have vanished; sports have taken their place. In both cases the chief concern is, of course, to kill time. But Jane Austen's people achieved that end by daubing paper with their futile, pretty water-colours; Mr Galsworthy's people kill time by killing game. Mr Galsworthy's people talk only of their sports or their estates—occasionally of politics, viewed from the standpoint of their sports and their estates. Jane Austen's people will discuss a landscape from a purely disinterested standpoint as something paintable, and not merely as so much covert and preserve. The talk, when they get together, seeks a common topic likely to interest all in an equal degree, not in racing or shooting, but in—conduct. Sometimes, of course, it is the most wearisome and trivial gossip, but gossip after all implies an interest in character. Mr Galsworthy's people, on the other hand, live externally. They are not busy in testing events by some ideal standard, as the Emmas and the Knightleys are, and still less do they discuss what that standard should be. Their judgments are more instinctive. Certain things are taboo

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

and bad form ; they condemn them with the instinctive assurance of a savage tribe. But they do not reason about morals, and they are not interested in themselves. One might suppose that while Miss Austen was describing life about A.D. 1811, Mr Galsworthy was writing an historical novel about some much anterior period, and spoiling an otherwise brilliant performance by some amazing anachronisms about railways and politics.

The explanation lies, I think, in the physical change which a century has brought about in the animal life of the country house. Mr Woodhouse has abandoned gruel and reconciled himself to open windows. Harriet goes for her country walks in all weathers. Mrs Elton no longer thinks a donkey the one necessity of country life. She rides a bicycle. Mr Elton has stopped drawing ; in moments of emotion he goes, like Mr Galsworthy's rector, to the corner of his 'study' and oils his cricket-bat. With quicker blood and an active open-air life, the minds of these people, never by nature intellectual, have lain fallow, and reverted to a simpler and more elementary level. They are barbarians, living under the restraints of

ON BOOKS

a civilisation which hems them in from outside. Sometimes they shake it off. They develop a George Pendyce, and give way to the crude passions of their over-fed animal nature. Or they evolve on the lines of the Bellew pair, reckless, *déclassés*, hard-riders, hard-drinkers, fierce lovers, of whom it is said that there always are two such people 'in a hunting county.' An American philosopher wrote a learned and entertaining book the other day to prove that the habits of thought of the new generation in the States are due to the fact that it has adopted sugar in place of alcohol as the basis of its animal pleasures. The difference between Mr Galsworthy's generation and Jane Austen's is that it has exchanged the morning-room for the open-air.

THE TRUTH OF MIDNIGHT

TWENTY-EIGHT years have passed since the genius of James Thomson found its cruel and sordid end in a London hospital. It is a lapse of time that commonly suffices to sweeten the acerbities even of theological controversy. The doubts of a dead Atheist cease to evoke the defiant contradiction. The miseries of a dead pessimist serve the pulpit as a warning against his gloomy creed. The fellow-rebels of his generation have long since passed into the odour of sanctity. Who was there, when at last he died, who remembered that any shoulder had ever shrugged at Meredith's name? What echo of the old denunciations lingered when Swinburne was buried? And even Bradlaugh who was for twenty years the ally and friend of Thomson, came to his burial amid the salutes of the armies he had fought. In the battle against orthodoxy, it is longevity

ON BOOKS

which wins. When the world fails to overwhelm the young rebel, it prepares itself to do honour to his grey hairs. James Thomson's mistake was that he died at fifty, broken by poverty, despair, and drink. Had he but continued for another twenty years to defame the nature of things, the laurels would ere now have grown on his grave. The nature of things is essentially opportunist. It bows to persistent calumny, and prefers no suits for libel against a grey-beard. It is another sort of immortality which in the end will come for Thomson. When all who remembered as living men that angry, dis-tempered Atheism of the 'seventies are safely in their graves, when a world converted to the Higher Criticism and the New Theology has forgiven the rude assaults of its frontal attack, the records that he left of its mood will be studied as human documents, and the lines that he wrote under its inspiration will take their due rank among the few great things added to the store of English poetry in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The moment, it may be, is all but come for the dramatic recognition, and the appearance of a little volume, half critical, half biographical from the pen of Mr Bertram Dobell,

THE TRUTH OF MIDNIGHT

The Laureate of Pessimism, may help to hasten the inevitable.

Only a biographer of supreme genius could create for us a living portrait of the fierce and miserable spirit that built for itself an Inferno in Mid-Victorian England. The son of a ship's mate and a native of Port Glasgow, Thomson sprang from the same racial stock and the same social stratum which produced a Burns and a Tannahill. His education indeed, was more studied and academic than theirs. He was trained to earn a secure, if meagre, living as an army school-master, and he found leisure to explore the whole range of European Literature, and became, in the process, a notable German and Italian scholar. Three events alone stand out in his early years—the death of his first love, his meeting with the young dragoon who afterwards became the famous Bradlaugh, and his dismissal from the army for his share in a drunken escapade. In his own reading of his career, it was the loss of his girl sweetheart which laid the foundation of his pessimism. His *nom de plume* (Byssche Vanolis) claimed affiliation first to Shelley and then to Novalis in whose spiritual history a like bereavement had a like effect. And indeed one is startled

ON BOOKS

to come, amid the blackest gloom that broods over his collected work, upon some happy fragment which reveals the simple affections, the tender and reverent attitude towards women, that no happy love was destined to reward. The portrait of 'The Sleeper' and the pretty miniature, in 'Up the River,' of the 'little straw hat with the streaming blue ribbons' are the work of a man who understood, in all his wanderings among metaphysical sorrows and nightmare despairs, the simple happinesses and the common human joys. Bradlaugh looms up in Thomson's career with more than the significance which Godwin had in Shelley's. Godwin still stood in a respectable and well-connected line of rationalists. His was the revolt of philosophy, a scepticism which still affected the grand manner, and avoided the applause of mobs. Bradlaugh's was a proletarian Atheism, conceived in barrack-rooms and propagated at street corners. The revolt which Thomson sang was a democratic protest against the supreme Autocrat. He was content to bury his greatest work in the obscure free-thought weeklies, which were the typical product of this period. One might read his more dignified writings with their

THE TRUTH OF 'MIDNIGHT'

opulent vocabulary, their easy rhythms, their accent of educated speech, and attribute them to a scholar born to leisure. But his consciousness of class leaps up insurgent and contemptuous in 'Sunday at Hampstead':

On Sunday we're Lord and Lady
With ten times the love and glee
Of those pale and languid rich ones
Who are always and never free.

It speaks again with a furious Republican malice in the neat lyrical epigrams of 'L'Ancien Régime.' It tells of the narrow life of privation which is the lot of the intellectual born in an alien caste, in that most moving of his lesser poems, where the decrepit furnishings of a poor man's garret gossip over the suicide's bed. The whole phase of thought belongs to that last sterile period in the history of the European proletariat, before socialism had given it a constructive purpose, while religion still was other-worldly, and no optimist faith stirred as yet in the souls of men. While Thomson was comforting a broken heart with classical lines and cheap whisky, Karl Marx was working away in the British Museum at the theory which was to give the working class a hope of conquest and a vision of assured,

ON BOOKS

though distant, good. These philosophic comforts were nothing to Thomson. He saw in history only the records of futile revolt and hopes forlorn, and his world staggered on, sure only to repeat its sodden miseries. His Atheism lacks the calmness of certainty. It is not so much a denial as a defiance. Its mood is neither contempt nor dogmatism. It is the outrageous anger of the under dog.

Who is most wretched in this dolorous place ?
I think myself ; yet I would rather be
My miserable self than He, than He
Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace.

One suspects that under all the furious words of denial there lurked in the secret places of Thomson's brain some relic of belief, some cell so shaped by its Calvinistic ancestry that it could not deny. It hated, indeed, and, as the most exquisite revenge which it could conceive against its Creator, it formed its lips to a denial. The outcasts who wander in his limbo, because they had no hope to leave behind them at the gates of hell, were the men of that Mid-Victorian age who had not yet armed themselves with the comforts of the new reading of history. His work, as he said himself, told the

THE TRUTH OF MIDNIGHT

‘truth of midnight.’ ‘There was a dawn to come.

A mood is worth the songs it sings. A creed is worth the cathedral it builds. And it is this mood and this creed which have given us the greatest poem of its generation. From the majesty of its title to the bitter calm of its concluding stanza, ‘The City of Dreadful Night’ is indeed a great poem. Other poets have written nightmare visions, and there are occasional touches in Thomson’s work that remind us of Coleridge and even of Poe and Baudelaire. But this is nightmare that has become a system. Its dreams have the vastness and rigidity of great architecture. The stones have been painfully hewn; its filigree Gothic rests on firm foundations. If this is nightmare, it is a Scotsman’s nightmare. It is lucid and logical in its delirium, and cogent in its terrors. This is, indeed, no vision city of a rare insomnia. It is a dream that has grown into solidity by the repetition of its unsparing torment :

But when a dream night after night is brought
Throughout a week, and such weeks, few or many,
Recur each year for several years, can any
Discern that dream from real life in aught ?

It is, indeed an intellectual hell, and nothing

in any mediæval Inferno afflicts the spirit like the steadiness and the reasonableness of its mere despair. In the old hells, at least, there was action, multitude and motion, companionship and variety. Here is nothing but the brooding inane, the mere recognition of failure and emptiness. Its very moderation is its most refined cruelty, and one rises from it with Shelley's lines on one's lips, 'Hell is a city much like London.' Critics have called the poem monotonous. But what a variety is there in it of craftsmanship and imagination! Its versification can move with that easy, serpent-like insinuation that is a sort of jointed and acrobatic prose, the movement of Byron's *Don Juan*. It can rise to a stateliness that recalls *Adonais*. It has its sections of coloured and romantic fresco-work, like the description of the haunted desert round the city where one sees, as in some mad etching by Méryon, 'enormous things . . . with savage cries and clanking wings.' It has its sculpture gallery, where the imagery of nightmare grows of a sudden plastic and austere, a thing no less horrible because of the beauty of its perfect form. It can be epigrammatic like that haunting refrain :

THE TRUTH OF MIDNIGHT

But I strode on austere,
No hope can have no fear.

It has its episodes like the dialogues of the lost souls, and the awful picture of the spirit which had no hope to deposit as its entrance fee to hell. In every picture and every speech it arrests. For it was the singularity of Thomson's genius that the white heat of its furnace of despair turned out its bronzes definite and firm. When he speaks it is classical oratory. When he depicts, it is moulded sculpture. When he plans his city of nightmare, it has all the form and concreteness which happier dreamers have given to their Cities of the Sun. There is in his visions nothing fantastic, no elusive veil, no gossamer outline, no fragrance of an opium cloud. He bites his picture on perennial copper with the acid of anger and pain. Such work can wait securely for the justice of time. Its masonry is not of yielding brick, its statuary is not of crumbling stone. It will outlive the age that produced it. It tells a truth that is true—at midnight.

III
ON MUSIC

‘CHOPIN VILLA’

THE name of Chopin carries with it to each of us its own peculiar associations. To some this son of a French father, born one hundred years ago, the exiled child of an exile, stands, by some paradox, for Poland. To others it is linked, by all the ties of gossip and the immortality of literary scandal, to the fading memory of George Sand. To the writer it suggests a prim, stuccoed villa among the hesitating trees and vanishing fields of a London suburb. A little lady lived there, stiffer and primmer than the stucco of her villa. Her grey curls perpetuated the vanities of the Regency. Her ample skirts of silk seemed always to demand a shadowy crinoline. Miss Brown had been my mother's teacher, and the elegance of her retirement betrayed itself in the name which stared in bold lettering

ON MUSIC

among the drooping laburnums of her porch. 'Chopin Villa' kept alive the memory of a vanished epoch, and rebuked by its sedate romance the contemporary vulgarities around it. The cool drawing-room, with its pruderies and refinements, summed up the spirit of an age. The long windows admitted their floods of light, as though to defy the least suggestion of hidden dirt. There were chairs on which no one might sit, and tables which no one used. The wall-paper suggested the pattern of a silken gown. Wax fruit under a glass case adorned an alabaster table. Water-colours after Birket Foster hung on the walls between portraits, of Victoria and Albert. On the shelves the grim verses of Eliza Cook stood side by side with the gentler romance of Mrs Hemans. The albums and annuals in which that age delighted, *The Moss Rose*, *Friendship's Garland*, and I know not how many *Gems of Literature*, exhaled their thin fragrance and displayed their faded colours behind the locked glass door of the book-case. Twice a day, until at last the old fingers grew too stiff and the old eyes too blind, Miss Brown sat down to the cottage piano with its front of pleated silk. In the

CHOPIN VILLA

morning, when her housework was decently accomplished, she played a waltz or mazurka of Chopin. In the evening, when the ritual of tea had been fulfilled, and the Venetian blinds pulled down, a nocturne punctually broke the cheerful silence of that pink and saffron room. For Miss Brown the evolution of music had ceased with Chopin's 'Funeral March.' Once a year, and once only, on the solemn anniversary, it, too, was played, the only break in a round observed as carefully as the reading of morning and evening prayer.

What was it that so endeared Chopin to the most correct of Early Victorian ladies? He had none of the obvious recommendations of Mendelssohn. He was not a Protestant, nor even a converted Jew. He had never been a favourite at any virtuous Court. He wrote no sacred music. Chopin's appeal was precisely to all that side of life which the Early Victorian repressed in practice to idolise in imagination. It was so easy to link romantic tales with his waltzes, but, above all, with his nocturnes. Miss Brown was never tired of the exercise. If she had a favourite, it was that solemn and beautiful lament, where there occurs a

ON MUSIC

ghostly chorale, which sings its muffled harmonies like the night chanting of spectral monks in a ruined cloister. The little boy who frequented 'Chopin Villa' to hear her playing in the uncertain light of summer evenings, shivered with a horrible joy as she explained with irresistible conviction how this particular nocturne referred to the ghost of a guilty nun, mured up in a ruined convent, which was haunted at night by choirs of chanting monks. He has often reflected in later life that if Miss Brown had met that erring nun in the flesh, she would have drawn in her stiff silken skirts with a very decisive movement, and crossed to the other side of the road. But there is a fascination in the guilt of ghosts. One is not compromised by condoning their sins. In the brisk and orderly existence of Miss Brown, the dreamy yet passionate sadness of all this music was the other half of life, the indispensable compensation for long years of regularity and self-discipline. At her work-box, while she sorted out her silks and arranged her needles, she was of all British maiden-ladies the most impeccable and correct. The wide world of fancy and emotion claimed her at the cottage-piano,

CHOPIN VILLA

and in Chopin she found it in a form which stirred the emotions without shattering the heart, and stimulated the fancy without setting the feet in motion. Twice a day to these exotic rhythms she played in waltz or mazurka her 'Over the hills and far away' with endless variations. But so gentle, so subtle, so little disturbing was the music, that she never, in fact, felt so much as an impulse to take the horse-bus into town. One trembles to think what would have been the effect upon her sensitive nature of the later developments of Slavonic music. There are martial movements in Tchaikowsky which might have sent her post-haste to join the suffragettes. But Chopin sounded no call to action. Was he not an exile, himself resigned to a life of brooding? And Polish exiles were not to be confounded with some others of whom Miss Brown had heard. They were an aristocratic people. They wore no red shirts. They threw no bombs. If they could not recover the freedom of their country, they sat down to a piano in Paris in the politest way in the world, and expressed their melancholy in the most exquisite musical creations of our age.

ON MUSIC

It is, perhaps, because we all hear him still in the mental background of the Early Victorian drawing-room that Chopin's work seems to us to belong emphatically to the music that speaks with a dialect. It is not indeed, Polish, as folk-tunes are Polish. It is like those Babylonian psalms, which are not Babylonian, though we hear in them the sound of the waters of captivity. Above all, it is the product of Paris in the full glamour of the romantic movement. We cannot forget that it was for the ears of Heine and Balzac, and for the critical appreciation of Berlioz, that these things were written. There is in them the conscious artifice of their period. One could set the Florentine Nights to the Nocturnes. It is a slighter and more graceful Byronism, this sentiment which is never sugary when it is sweetest, this pain which is never overmastering or mortal. The time for great architecture in music had gone by. The pride in form and construction had disappeared with the classical tradition that all the arts had simultaneously discarded. But as yet there was no great force of an insurgent message to create for itself new shapes of sound, or to restore and transform the old. The

CHOPIN VILLA

lesser dance forms were adequate for a mind which approached music, not from the intellectual, but from the emotional, side. Its triumph was to fashion from these prescribed forms, each with its necessary, its conventional, rhythm, an infinite variety of effect. They ring, to our modern ears, a little mannered, a little wilful in the elaborate beauty of their melancholy. It is as if a sigh had translated itself into the convolutions of some Moorish tracery. But only a shallow critic would call them artificial. So it was that the world thought and felt in that time of hampered energies and fettered wills. The foundation of its life was the triumph of a sturdy and massive reaction. It danced sadly to its Polish tunes, because it could not march to the Marseillaise. It built its flimsy cobweb of romance round the stout pillars of Philistia, which no Samson had pulled to the ground. Its nerves and its fancies, its dreams and its melancholies, these were the relaxations of the orderly stucco villa, where still there reigned the rigidity of a punctual decorum. This was the time between Waterloo and '48. One thinks of Chopin and Heine as its typical singers. Both were exiles. But it was the longing

ON MUSIC

for home which took them from home. In Paris they found the consolations of wit and sympathy, of love and fame, and the consequence was that they made the romantic tradition, with its imagined sorrows and its soothing melancholies. Had they stayed at home, they might have known the real tragedy of loneliness, the spiritual exile, and written with the passion and single-mindedness of a genuine sorrow. Chopin one cannot pity. Twice a day for fifty years the sweetest of maiden ladies played him reverently. She revelled in his wildness. She delighted in his lawlessness. She exulted, most of all, when she thought him barbaric and defiant. Yet never through all these years did his music do her the slightest harm. Ineffectual rebel! Innocuous Byron! George Sand shut you up while you lived in Minorca. Miss Brown chained your ghost in 'Chopin Villa.' That was the exile which you sought, the sorrow you deserved. And, secretly, you were very well content. But in 'Chopin Villa' the Venetian blinds are down to-day. The jerry-builder has bought the site, and when next there comes round in the Calendar, the solemn anniversary when the 'Funeral

CHOPIN VILLA

March' was played, men shall pass and hear only the jolly ring of trowels as the brick-layer whistles some robust and everlasting melody—'The English Ploughboy' or 'The British Grenadiers.'

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC

THERE is always something ghostly in a concert of old music. One listens to the fairy clatter of the harpsichord. One strains to catch under the harsher and robuster tones of the violins the modest sweetness of the viola di gamba—that ‘beautiful and ineffectual angel’ among stringed instruments. The grave padouane sweeps along with its stately rhythms. But when the shock of surprise is over, when you have remembered of what angelic player in a Bellini altar-piece the bowing of the viol player reminds you, when you have trained your ear to blend the tinkle of the harpsichord with the sighing of the strings, there creeps over you the first touch of an uncanny presence. It is like the cold breath of wind, or the swish of an unseen skirt which accompanies the visitation of the ghost in the haunted castle. There is nothing of this ghostliness in an old picture. A cavalier

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC

of Franz Hals laughs and drinks on the canvas with the same robust colouring, the same material body, which was his glory in life. He casts a shadow where he stands. His song rouses an echo in the rafters. He seems as real as that old lady your great-grandmother, who used to alarm you in your childhood by enquiring in her hours of dotage what news there was of Boney, and whether the King were still mad, poor man. It is otherwise with old music. One may see an old canvas with contemporary eyes. But a suite by Christian Bach is never a personal experience. One cannot hear it for the first time. Some magic of reminiscence haunts the ear. One gazes into the faces of the audience, as Shelley used to interrogate the babies on Magdalen Bridge, to see dawning in them the recollection of an innate idea. It is some distant and baffling memory which stirs in the brain. One seeks for the clue as one tries half-awake to recover the plot of a dream. It is like hearing after twenty years the words of some childish spell that used to send us to sleep amid the hobgoblins and shadows of the nursery. Once, it seems to us, we had the ears that vibrated to these

ON MUSIC

rhythms; once we had the feet that moved to these solemn measures. But there mingles with these physical recollections a more conscious historical effort. We see in a pageant before us the gay ladies who haunted Browning when he heard Galuppi's Toccata. We know how Christian Bach and C. F. Abel gave just such concerts as this in eighteenth century London. Dr Burney disputed with them, when he had heard this very sonata, and Fanny watched the fine ladies in their audience that she might satirise them in *Evelina*. The ghosts throng round us—ghosts from books, ghosts from fancy, ghosts from pictures, but above all that hereditary ghost which haunts our own ears, the ghost of that great-grandmother who clattered herself upon her harpsichord, while our grandfather played about her knees.

Such an experience is still a too rare pleasure. Miss Hannah Bryant provided it on Wednesday last in a programme of music revived for the first time in London. It was drawn from two centuries, and included works by J. H. Schein, who was born in 1586—a name unknown to Grove's 'Dictionary'—and Christian Bach, who died

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC

in 1782. Three items in it must have been written somewhere about the second decade of the seventeenth century. The programme, in short, bridged the time from Shakespeare to Dr Johnson. One listened, curious to understand from these specimens the place that such music had in the lives of such amateurs as Milton. The three specimens from the early seventeenth century had, to the unaccustomed ear, a startling similarity. One hardly distinguished what was personal in the styles of the three composers. They had all a naïve and primitive solemnity—and it is solemnity which such a writer as Milton seems most often to associate with music. The strings moved steadily through *padouane* and *allemande* almost as voices mové through a chorale, steady, unflagging and balanced. There were neither pauses nor tricks of rhythm. Each instrument was continually occupied, and the effect on a small scale came near resembling that ultra-modern polyphony in orchestration which employs the full resources of the whole band from the first to the last bar of a composition. The effect was impressive, but it would also have been a little monotonous if it had not been strange.

ON MUSIC

The most individual and the most pleasing of all three compositions was to my thinking the *Pasameza* of Thomas Simpson—an Englishman who found fame in Germany at a time when our native musicians were an article of export. Here were the beginnings of a free handling of the instruments, a striving for variety, a sense for the dramatic possibilities of relief and change. A century later the last trammels of this antique stiffness, this primitive straightforwardness, had wholly vanished, and the concerto by John Humphries (not to be confused with the vain little Pelham Humfrey of Pepys's *Diary*), with which this delightful concert closed, sparkled with gaiety, audacity, and grace.

We have all of us dropped into the habit of thinking of music as the most universal of all the arts. It has no dialects; it has no dead languages. We are stirred by the manly sweep of an old crusader's hymn. Tchaikowsky moves us more readily than Elgar. Apart from its antiquarian interest, and its alluring historical suggestions, this old music means something to us. Its solemnity hushes, its grace delights us; our blood dances to its rhythms, and obeys in it

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC

a certain physical excitement. Yet the amateur who chooses to be honest with himself will make a frank confession. This old music carries with it no emotional appeal. It is as cold as some bridal robe in taffeta which hangs near the great coaches and the painted sedan chairs in the Musée de Cluny. You may listen to it for a couple of hours, admirably played as it was played by Miss Hannah Bryant and her colleagues. But your pulse beats no faster. You go out as you came in, curious, pleased, reflective, but unmoved. You have none of that sense that 'virtue has gone out' of you, that you have come through a deep, perhaps an awful experience, which weighs upon you after you have listened to great modern music. You are conscious of a dilettante satisfaction, but you have not partaken in a direct emotion.

Was it merely so that these old composers intended to affect us? Music is not, after all, a universal language. Listen to an Albanian ballad singer, with his nasal falsetto and his baffling quarter-tones. You are first amused, then bewildered, and at last moved to mere melancholy. His native hearers meanwhile have been lashed to

ON MUSIC

passion, it may be a warlike and energetic passion. And so it must have been with this old music, which is to us so slight and quaint, even when it is also gracious and pleasing. Men wrote of it then as though it conveyed to them emotions as overwhelming as Beethoven or Tchaikowsky convey to us. It stirred them to tears, when we are coldly curious. That faint suggestion of a graceful melancholy, that just perceptible haunting of a tender sadness, which is for us so oddly sweet, was for them an overpowering experience, as the funeral march in the Eroica is for us. 'I am never merry,' said Shylock's Jessica, 'when I hear sweet music.' But merry is precisely what we are when we listen to these old-world passions. We smile one to another, as we listen, just as we smile at the emotions of a gracious child. To the Elizabethan it had 'a dying fall—like the sweet south, that breathes upon a bank of violets.' Those suggestions of shadowy courtiers moving in unreal measures in demolished halls, those were not the impressions which these solemn dances made on the ears of those for whom they were composed. 'Even that vulgar and tavern-musick, which makes one man merry, another

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC

mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion and a profound contemplation of the first composer.' So said Sir Thomas Browne, and so might we say of the secular music of our own time. But the music which struck in him a 'deep fit of devotion' has lost that power over us. We have trained our emotions to obey only the more powerful stimuli of more developed music. We cannot hear these old airs with natural ears. The harpsichord can carry us clattering into 'faerie, but it cannot stir a direct human emotion. It is for us primarily not a piano, as the viola di gamba is primarily not a 'cello. We err only when we conclude that because we listen coldly, these old composers wrote coldly. We open the gates of our hearts only to the assault of rushing eloquence in sound. In the old days a sweet suggestion, a gracious hint, carried the soul with violence and by storm.

ON HANDEL'S LARGO

THE anniversary of Handel's death fell this year (1907) on a Sunday, and Mr Wood, who has the instinct for occasions, celebrated it very worthily at his Queen's Hall concert. One is tempted to ask, however, what happens when the anniversary falls on a week day. For somehow or other it is always Sunday in England when Handel is played. His operas and his chamber music are hardly allowed to find their way to the heart of the English public, and he lives among the immortals by his religious work alone. It was so even in his life. He poured forth melodious operas, which beat the Italians on their own ground, and the town wits only wrote epigrams about Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee. He composed the 'Messiah,' and a grateful nation buried him in Westminster Abbey. And yet it was in his purely secular moods that he had some of his happiest and most royal

ON HANDEL'S LARGO

inspirations. His orchestral suites are sometimes played in London, when a German conductor, innocent of English prejudices, comes over on a flying visit, although there is hardly in all the range of old-word music, outside the Brandenburg Concertos, such a glory of motion, such a rush of vitality, such a flood of gaiety and joy. But a really typical English audience would probably be a little shocked to realise that its Handel has a great place among purely secular composers. An exquisite Hebrew love-sequence came down to the mediæval Church with Solomon's name upon it, and the Church found sacred wisdom in it. Handel's Largo in G has delighted generations of Englishmen, and because it is Handel's we have heard religion in it.

Certainly as the gracious stately melody was played on Sunday it did really sound religious. M. Sons, who played the solo part, is not an Englishman, but like Handel himself he has made England his home ; the harp helped the illusion, and the organ, discreetly pervading the whole accompaniment, removed the last lingering doubt. Here and there in the audience a voice joined modestly and almost unconsciously

ON MUSIC

in what its owner clearly felt to be a sort of anthem. There is, after all, no reason, as John Wesley put it, why the devil should have all the best tunes, and the Largo, 'arranged' in this edifying manner by a Viennese gentleman, has doubtless been snatched for all time from the world and the flesh. And yet as Handel wrote it, it certainly meant nothing at all religious. The quaint words of the banale Italian libretto have left on record the impression which he wished to convey, when first he wrote *Ombra mai fu* as an operatic air. It turns on the episode in the story of Xerxes,

when he stayed
His march to conquest of the world, a day
I' the desert, for the sake of the superb
Plane tree, which queened it there in solitude.

Nothing could be less sublime or more mundane than the words of the address to the tree. The only definite idea which they express is satisfaction ('I find no other place so fair') and peace ('thunders, lightnings and storms never outrage its dear peace'). There is much about 'the never-dying shade of the vegetable,' but nothing at all about God. 'A book of verses underneath the bough' (perhaps even a jug of wine), and not the

ON HANDEL'S LARGO

sacred suggestions of the organ and the harp ought rather to be latent in the melody. The Greek sceptics used to meet the stoic wiseacres with the assertion that every truth could be countered by its contrary, and they made war on all wisdom by marshalling these oppositions. When the devotees of Strauss and programme music come forward with their faith in the power of a musical phrase to express some definite meaning, or to conjure up some precise and single image, one is tempted to array against them a series of musical contradictions. If the same air can express the most opposite ideas, one is tempted to conclude that no air expresses any idea at all. An English Sunday school finds scope for its religious feeling in the air which has been set to 'When Mothers of Salem.' A rollicking band of German students finds that the same air moves them to breathless cups and chirping mirth in the maddest moment of a Kneipe. It is all a question of speed. Largo it is edifying, presto it is hilarious; largo it is religious, presto it belongs to the flesh and the devil. The same air will serve to describe the fiery determination of the Scots at Bannockburn to do or die, or

ON MUSIC

depict the gentle end of the unheroic peasant who was 'wearing awa' to the 'Land o' the Leal.' There is a sombre ecclesiastical air of a moving but melancholy beauty, which the 'cellos give out in Tchaikowsky's '1812.' It seems to answer the almost flippant 'Marseillaise' (Tchaikowsky must have been something of a Jingo to make the 'Marseillaise' so trivial). It opposes Holy Russia to revolutionary France. It is the air which the English churches have set to 'Rock of Ages.' I mentioned this to a Russian friend the other day. He seemed at first a little shocked by my admiration, and then he grudgingly admitted that the air was moving. So, at least, he judged by its effects. It is the air which the Black Hundred sing when they march out to make a specially bloody 'pogrom.'

For the purpose of a mere sceptic in music it might be enough to set out these contradictions, and leave them to shout confusion to the doctrinaires of the programme and the 'leading motive.' But in all candour they mean something more positive than a merely anarchical conclusion. The suggestion of a melody can never be precise. It cannot render the whole intricate

ON HANDEL'S LARGO

content of the words with which it is associated. It conveys something more general than any word, a suggestion more universal and more subtle. * A certain ascending sequence in one of Strauss' songs may seem to fit exactly the word 'Himmel-Blau' which it accompanies. It can suggest 'azure,' but I suspect it would suit a 'mountain' or 'ideality' quite as happily. But it would not suggest 'dark blue,' or 'true till death.' This I suspect, is the inner truth about Handel's Largo.

Beethoven has been the victim of a similar trick. The slow movement of the Second Symphony has a not dissimilar beauty. Gracious it is, placid, contented, moving with exquisite sweeps and large, easy gestures, free from all thought of struggle or assertion. Indolent is the word which most aptly fits its grace, and if it calls up an image, it is of sunny meadows, warm skies, and grateful shades—the imagery of Omar's 'bough,' and Handel's plane-tree. But it has met the same fate as the Largo. It has been set, not inappropriately, in a popular collection as a religious song of praise and gratitude ('My God and King'). The moods, after all, have some common

ON MUSIC

denominator. In an indolent contentment that is innocent yet purely sensuous, and in the exaltation of a saint who in a moment of mingled resignation*and gratitude sees the world fair, orderly and good, there is a common emotional factor. The mystics have often translated the imagery of one state into the symbolism of the other. Music does but follow their lead. Analyse, for example, the imagery of that exquisite, sacred Hebrew lyric 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' The picture is one of sensuous contentment amid green pastures and running brooks. In so far as that contentment is physical, music could express it, but so far only. In both states the sensuous and the religious, we agree that all is right with the world; in both we are passive; in both we are pleased, with a pleasure, that brings with it no stimulus to eager action or violent joy; in both states passivity and approval make for a certain dignity. So much music can express. The difference begins when the Saint traces his contentment with the earth to the First Cause who made it, whereas the worldling is content to accept and enjoy. This difference music cannot and does not express, because it is an intellectual and not

ON HANDEL'S LARGO

an emotional difference. It is the physical basis of emotion which dictates the 'mode' of music, and the physical basis is necessarily simple, general, and vague. Music is neither secular nor religious. It can at best suggest the beating of the pulse, the rhythm of the blood that accompanies a given order of ideas.

THE SEA IN MUSIC

IN simple and primitive societies it was at one time expected of a minstrel that he should be blind. Homer, to be sure, has become for modern criticism a composite and multitudinous personality. But one fact about him no scholar will abandon. Homer was undoubtedly blind—a proposition which must be interpreted in the light of modern knowledge to mean that all and each of him were blind. How else should he have built up his rhythms and his cadences, his resounding lines, his melodies that dance upon six feet? His case suggests an important reform in the education of modern musicians. It is, to be brief, that, at an early period of their spiritual development, they should all be blinded, painlessly, if possible, but still effectively. Eyes are useful in music for the purposes of study. But at the first sign of a real talent for composition, the regrettable, but indispensable, operation should be

THE SEA IN MUSIC

humanely performed. Delay it even for a year, and the most promising musician may be lured away by the pride of life, and the beckoning of a too interesting visual world. It was the hearing of some of the work of M. Debussy the other day which suggested this painful conclusion. Let no one think these sentences hasty or unjust. M. Debussy was plainly visible when he conducted his symphonic suite, *The Sea*, on an earlier occasion at the Queen's Hall. He is not blind. The result must have convinced every unprejudiced mind of the necessity of this drastic reform. M. Debussy has written three long movements about the sea, and he has written them with his eyes.

It was purely sensuous work, sensitive, strange, and very clever, but in its total rejection of every intellectual element in music so nearly wearisome that one's thoughts went straying as one listened. What sea, one asked, was it that Debussy was describing? It was no real sea at all, but more probably a seascape painted in a studio by some modern impressionist for a Paris Salon. It had waves and it had atmosphere. It had a changing sky. The dawn crept up across it, and the noonday sun

ON MUSIC

lay over it, placid and cloudless and bright. It was, in short, the sea of the eyes, the sea which makes in us all a visual excitement, and sends us, if we have the skill, to our canvases and palettes. He had taken this visual sea, and tried to render it by little intricate rhythms and chromatic passages, to translate the world of sight painfully and elaborately into the world of sound.

The musician who tries to rival the painter by describing external things, is a magician who has thrown aside his wand to wield a quarter-staff. The relations of the two arts to the emotions which call forth their exercise are fundamentally different, and music has the incomparable advantage in its freedom and in its scope for the expression of personality. A painter has a subject which interests him—an expressive face, a landscape which reveals some rare and arresting play of light, a scaffolding in process of erection, like those amazing creations of Mr Muirhead Bone's, where ropes and poles and heaps of ruin tell of the miracle of human energy. The scene has made in his mind a ferment, a powerful visual excitement. So far his experience does not differ from the musician's. Each is, no

THE SEA IN MUSIC

doubt, dependent, though in very different degrees, upon external stimulus. To the painter there is always something seen. To the musician it may be an event, a personal experience, an historic moment, or even some actual sound. The painter goes home, and his task is to render upon canvas not so much his own excitement as its cause. He selects, he emphasises, he idealises, and he adds the element of achievement and craftsmanship. But still his main business is to record in color and line, not his emotion, but the outward thing, which was its occasion. The musician, on the contrary, starts beyond his stimulus. He need not dally with it, nor seek to reproduce it. His business is entirely with the emotions and the audible excitement which it has stirred within him. He sings not battle, but the joy of battle; not death, but the terror and majesty of death; not the sea, but the mystery and grandeur of the sea. His medium, be it never so elaborate, is a development of song and dance, of rhythm and melody, of pure emotional expression, and not of the arts of reproduction and imitation. His impulse, once given to him, matters nothing to his hearer. The prattle of children, the stir of

ON MUSIC

springtide woods, the riotous merriment of birds—all may excite him, but his work when it is finished will express only his sympathetic joy, his emotional reaction and response to these various incitements. It matters nothing to his hearers whether in fact it was child or bird or wood which gave him his starting point.

They say that the startling and emphatic phrase which opens Beethoven's Fifth Symphony had its origin in a knock upon his door. But who cares to ask whether the knocker really beat to that rhythm? What matters is the suggestion of surprise, and the development of the phrase until it comes to have a world-shaking significance, and to express the breaking of the outer world of force and destiny upon the seclusion of the soul. What matters even more is the smooth-flowing phrase, begotten of no external incentive whatever, in which the soul appears to give its tranquil answer to the world. There is a movement in the Pastoral Symphony which Beethoven himself labelled 'The Brook.' It does not describe a brook. It renders rather the gentle flow of spirits which the monotonous murmur of a brook may occasion. If Beethoven had been

THE SEA IN MUSIC

impressed, as Strauss was, by the spectacle of a baby in its bath, he would not have tried to reproduce the noise of splashing water. He would have rendered his own humorous excitement in rollicking rhythms and truncated melodies. If he had been impressed, as Strauss was, by the sight of a flock of sheep, he would not have made his orchestra bleat for three minutes on end. One might wager that he would have written a fugue to express the excitement of multitudinous motion and pattering feet.

The intelligent partisan of 'absolute music will complain, not that Debussy went down to the sea, watched the sun rise and the frolic of the waves, or heard the wind in rude argument with the waters. His complaint will be rather that Debussy stayed there, that he settled down as a painter might, with a camp-stool and an easel, and was content to try to reproduce in sound a sort of parallel to the sights which moved him. His sea, in consequence, is a literal and purely external thing. It is the sea that tosses and undulates, that glints and darkens. It is that and nothing more.

A blind musician would have cared nothing for the sea as an independent object. He

ON MUSIC

would have drawn from it, as Debussy does not, its emotional significance. He would have felt and rendered the excitement that comes from the wind and the salt spray upon one's cheeks. The sea, after all, is not mere water. It is a state of the skin. It is the scene of shipwrecks and battles. It is full of dead men's bones, and the floating wrack of Empires. It is a call of the blood, a tradition from the past. It is not an inhuman, an external thing. It is the antagonist and yet the friend, the enemy of life and yet to the brave the mother and lover of men. The painter may regard it as a mere phenomenon, the foreground of dawns, the mirror of noons. The musician, if he knows the limitations and the possibilities of his art, will see it rather as the most stupendous factor in the emotional life of mankind, the symbol of all its conflicts, the analogue of its perpetual warfare with a fluctuating, yet indomitable world. He will hear, in short, what Sophocles long ago heard on the Ægean, when it brought into his mind 'the turbid ebb and flow of human misery.'

OF FAUNS AND OBOES

THE London Symphony Orchestra gave yesterday a performance of Debussy's whimsical sketch, 'The Afternoon of a Faun.' It is a work which the critics have decided to admire, and the most resolute reactionary in music, the sturdiest enemy of the programme, must needs admit its cleverness. For all the ingenuity of its simple orchestration and the aptness of its themes, I confess that it comes near boring and offending me. That, however, is a personal impression, which is of interest to no one save myself. But this ambiguous tribute I will pay to Debussy—that he encourages my mind to wander while his faun is breathing voluptuous dreams into the oboes and the strings.

I found myself gazing in blank amazement at the row of decorous middle-class people in front of me who appeared to be listening with pleasure and edification. There were

ON MUSIC

broad matronly backs, reverent bald heads, here and there a gaunt clerical neck, and in every line of head and shoulder one could decipher rectitude, propriety, and virtue. Pillars of their churches, stern members of Charity Organisation Societies, teetotalers, models of thrift, self-discipline and self-help—one asked oneself in amazement what they were doing in that particular gallery. For, decadent and artificial as Debussy is, there is no mistaking his meaning, and for those whose imagination is defective there is, after all, the programme. The programme is bald, uncompromising, literal. The faun with whom Debussy invites us to spend an afternoon was by no means a virtuous biped.

It is well to be precise, and the programme is precision itself:

A faun rests in the heat of the day in the forest shade, and, turning his thoughts to nymphs and amorous delights, he imagines that he holds in his arms the Goddess of Love herself. But he breaks off from this thought, knowing that such presumption will bring dire punishment, and seeks forgetfulness in sleep.

There are two faun traditions in literature. There is the Pan who stands for the mystery of the woods and streams, and mocks the grave designs of man. He lies in wait on the mountain side for the Philistines who

OF FAUNS AND OBOES

are counting the rich harvest of their fleeces, or marching in all the solemnity of discipline to triumph and the battlefield. He sows fear in their hearts, turns their purposes to scorn, and vindicates the supremacy of the unchartered imagination. His pipe has its graver notes, and he vies even with Apollo. Shelley has set forth his swelling repertoire :

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the daedal earth,
And of heaven and the giant wars.
And love and death and birth.

But there were no such stops as these in the pipe of Debussy's faun. He was the mere animal faun, a biped without a soul, an intelligence without a future, a primitive furry thing, whose passions were those of a squirrel or a sparrow.

From the first statement of the grotesque faun theme to the sleepy close, the music is wholly sensuous, animal, voluptuous. The naughty sounds went floating about the broadcloth of the clergyman in front of me, and I found myself wondering what Tolstoy would have said about it all. He found the Kreutzer Sonata immoral—why, I have never been able to understand. He was shocked because Wagner's heroes in the

ON MUSIC

‘ Ring ’ come upon the stage with bare elbows and naked knees. What fire of denunciation and anger would he not have expended upon this little decadent trifle of Debussy’s!

The clergymen applauded rapturously, and I saw the great peasant shape of Tolstoy rising in front of them, menacing, angry, condemnatory. He growled out his pessimism in the bassoons and fagottoes of Tchaikowsky’s Fifth Symphony, and I heard him lamenting, through that tremendous outburst of Slavonic gloom, against the animal gaiety of the French decadent.

The concert was over, and I was wandering, half-troubled and half-amused, among the greenery of St James’s Park. Debussy’s faun went dancing through its artificial shades, his hoof-prints lightly touching the sward where Charles II and his Court used to celebrate their *fêtes champêtres*. I made a gallant Watteau background for him among the water and the trees, but still there came in pursuit the angry Slavonic peasant in his great beard and work-stained blouse, and the faun theme alternated in my brain with the mournful notes of the symphony. At last, perforce, I had to argue it out with Tolstoy.

OF FAUNS AND OBOES

‘Reverend sir,’ said I, diffident and stammering, ‘you forget that a faun is not a real existence. Those are literary passions, that he feels, fictitious amours. His sins are a mere artifice. They do not stir the pulse or heat the blood. It is all play and folly from the beginning to the end.’

The old man was angrier than ever.

‘Either those programme themes mean nothing at all, or they mean desire, voluptuousness, the revolt of the flesh, the superfluous naughtiness of a corrupt and luxurious society. If they mean anything at all to you and your clergymen, they must mean the indulgence of moods and desires, which you would be ashamed to avow.’

I fled abashed into the refuge of the Horse Guards quadrangle. But away from the angry old man, a sort of answer came to me. I remembered how cold the orchestration had been. There are instruments which express passion warmly and softly. Debussy had not used these. He had somehow sterilised his voluptuous phrases and made of them mere ghosts and echoes of desire. The dominant instrument was the oboe. Metaphorically I snatched the oboe and hurled it at Tolstoy.

ON MUSIC

‘Angry, tempestuous old man, tell me, if you will, what real passion, what actual human sin was ever breathed through the cold, virginal wood of an oboe. One may do murders with a trumpet, one may break the whole decalogue on a violin, but the oboe is something less than human. It is the instrument of Dresden shepherdesses, as cold and sinless as painted china.’

There remains to be written a whole chapter in the æsthetics of music, and I would call it the chapter of the oboe. The physiological school may try as it will to reduce the theory of expression to terms which connect certain sequences, certain rhythms with the reflex physical processes which express the primitive emotions. But there remains, when all is said, a vast field which belongs to mere fortuitous association.

The oboe has been from all time the pastoral instrument. It cannot dominate the orchestra without at once altering the plane of reality. It carries us at once to Sicily, or if you will to Dresden. It introduces, into the world of mere absolute sound, a suggestion which is historical and literary. It sets us thinking in terms of Theocritus and Virgil. It makes of what other-

OF FAUNS AND OBOES

wise might be sheer straightforward human emotion a literary convention, a deliberate artifice. '*The Faun's Afternoon*,' thanks to the oboe, is as remote from reality and passion as the '*Rape of the Lock*' itself.

At that moment two guardsmen rode by, gay anachronisms, useless phantoms, glittering and resplendent in their brass helmets and scarlet tunics. I beckoned to Tolstoy.

'See there,' said I, 'will you say that those guardsmen express bloody-mindedness and brutality?'

A German student dressed in the business-like uniform of the duel, with a leather apron in front of him, is vastly more typical of brutality than these archaic figures. Even khaki is ten times more horrible. The human mind has devised conventions which can rob the passions of their grossness and reality. Desire on the furry legs of a fawn grows innocent; brutality in a breast-plate is almost gentle.

IV
ON VARIOUS THEMES.

THE DECAY OF MELODRAMA

THERE is a state of mind in which it is proper to visit a melodrama, as there is a state of mind in which it is proper to go to church. You must leave behind you your problems, your bewilderments, your eccentricities. On this stage nothing is in doubt. It is not here that new casuistries are applied to old sins, or fresh solutions sought for ancient bewilderments. You expect from the melodramatist a firm and unquestioning morality, a well-tried plot, an inevitable end. His message has the certainty of orthodox preaching, and it comes to you with the assurance of anonymity. The author's name, perhaps, is in the bills; but you do not look for it. The curtain is his surplice, the cheers of the gallery his ordination. He stands in an 'apostolic succession, and you may predict of him, before you have seen his piece, that he will question none of the councils and prevaricate over none of the

ON VARIOUS THEMES

articles. In his pulpit there is no heresy. Virtue will always triumph. Of his erring characters one at least will have a heart of gold. The *ingénue* will assuredly wear yellow hair. The villainess will certainly dress in black. You go to the solemn performance, not because you look for novelty, but because you are comfortably certain of its absence. It is a ritual, and you love it because it stirs in your breast the older loyalties, the surer faiths of our race. You would resent a variation, as you would a new ceremonial in your village church. So it was that our ancestors saw life, and so our descendants will see it. The footlights are a consecrated illumination which range the shadows and adjust the glories, as men have chosen to see them adjusted, since ever their hands could clap. On this stage no piece is ever stale. It has its repertory theatre in every village booth, where still you may see the classic *Iron Box*—an adaptation of Godwin's *Caleb Williams*—or the older and still more classic *Sweeney Todd*. They have never bent to changing fashions. Their morality submits to no social evolution. Their judgments admit no 'larger hope.' In their world, vice is vice and virtue is

THE DECAY OF MELODRAMA

virtue, and the naval officer always marries the golden girl. Here alone is your *quod semper*, your *quod ubique*. Cross the Channel, and you will find that strolling companies are playing the same pieces with the same morality to Norman peasants at village fairs. The uniforms are changed. The local colour is varied. But the same brave men share with the same tender women the splendours of the stage and the plaudits of the pit.

A blind man who knows the traditions of our stage can find his way to the melodrama with no guiding hand to lead him. The acid scent of oranges is its symbol and advertisement. The orange-seller does not ply her trade outside the theatres where strenuous crowds are waiting to be harrowed by *Justice* or to be caught in some guilty triangle of the affections. The orange is not the fruit of the intellectuals, nor yet of the frivolous and the light-minded. It is part of a usage which never varies. Where Drury Lane opens towards Covent Garden this venerable trade grew up. An innovating London has swept away the cloistered inns and the timbered houses. The narrow lanes admit to-day the sun which for three

ON VARIOUS THEMES

centuries they never saw, and wild flowers are growing on the waste land where once was the centre of a nation's revels. But the faint scent from the orange-woman's basket brings back with it the ghosts who sold and bought and paid their duty to melodrama on this narrow acre between restoration and revolution, from Commonwealth to County Council. Just so Nell Gwynne must have stood as the chairs and the coaches set down their brilliant burdens. In these days oranges were not the exclusive solace of the pit. One is constrained to believe that King Charles himself must have devoured them between the acts and flung the skins upon the floor of the royal box.

It was the orange-woman who lured us into the Aldwych Theatre. *Cucullus non facit monachum*. It takes more than an orange to make a melodrama. We confess we were a little suspicious of the title of the piece. *The Bad Girl of the Family* has a meretricious, even a modern, ring about it. The true melodrama deals rather with the good girl. Its votaries are interested, above all, in the triumph of virtue. Nor were the posters altogether promising. That lady

THE DECAY OF MELODRAMA

with the sinister leer belongs to another tradition. Woman in melodrama is not the destroyer or the vampire. She errs, indeed, but always by the defects of her qualities. If we are to consider it nicely, Mr Walter Melville's piece marks a decay and a decline in British melodrama. The music-hall has invaded his stage, and the clowning riots out of all reason and proportion. Melodrama demands its broad humours, its physical jokes, its recognised absurdities. But here, too, something is due to tradition. It is to sin against all the canons of the art that the tragic characters should themselves lapse into their moments of buffoonery. The essence of the tradition is its sincerity, its broad and clear-browed seriousness. We must know from the beginning who are the laughable and who are the pathetic personages. What is tolerable in the Irishman or the old woman is not allowed in the heavy lady or the *ingénue*. We respect a yellow wig when we see it ; it may make us weep, it may make us cheer, but it must not make us laugh. We know the deep chest notes appropriate to stage wickedness ; they must not be varied by a screaming falsetto. It is, moreover, past all forgiving that a moving

ON VARIOUS THEMES

scene, in which the heroine is about to be arrested for a murder, should suddenly degenerate into a pillow-fight between girls and policemen. We speak of these things gravely and with regret. There is a great classic tradition to conserve, and no one who honours the history of our stage can see it violated without a serious protest. Mr Melville is playing Strausslike tricks with a form as reverent and inviolable as the symphony itself. These indecent familiarities, where all should be high purpose and pure emotion, are as gross violations of good taste as the splashing of the baby in its bath midway in the *Symphonia Domestica*, or the bleating of the sheep in *Don Quixote*. Mr Melville murders passably well. But the suspicion seizes us that he does not take his own plots seriously. We do. We were all agog for the tragic sequel. We thrilled when the 'bad girl' rushed, a panting fugitive, into that bedroom. We applauded with all our hands when those spirited girls vowed that they would save their comrade. The least that we expected was that one of them would thrust her slender arm, like Catharine Douglas, into the staple of the lock. There

THE DECAY OF MELODRAMA

had come one of those tense heroic moments for which melodrama exists. It was an impishness worthy of Mr Shaw which gave us a pillow-fight for our anti-climax. We hasten to add that, although Mr Melville's piece is decadent and frivolous melodrama, it does at least retain some relics of a great inheritance. The 'bad girl' is really good at heart—had it been otherwise we should not have deemed her history worthy of notice, nor would the crowds have flocked to see her. The morality throughout rings true and sure—though the moral speeches, we regret to state, are almost epigrammatic in their brevity. There is a convict scene, and a stirring marriage scene. There is a bad earl, and a good thief. Mr Melville is worth a remonstrance. Had he canonised the earl, or damned the thief, we should have consigned him to the oblivion which is the uttermost darkness.

Melodrama is decadent. Yet the fault lies, we are convinced, with the dramatists and not with the public. These vast crowds which flock to *The Bad Girl* lack nothing of the old seriousness, the essential loyalty of mind. And it is the pit which makes the melodrama. You may write your problem-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

play as you will, and it matters little how the public receives it. You have done your thinking aloud. But of a melodrama there is only one test. It is that your audience should hiss your villains. Fail in that, and you have failed in all. There was nothing wanting at the Aldwych in the heartiness with which the audience hissed. We can conceive no prouder moment in an actor's career than that in which he first receives this tribute to his realism. So Apelles must have felt when the birds pecked at the cherries on his canvas. He is lost in his art, forgotten in his own success. He knows that his hearers have judged him as they judge of life. They are in no mood to recognise counterfeits and simulacra. Your drawing-room play may turn on philanderings and flirtations, on misunderstandings to be cleared up, on points of casuistry to be determined. But the melodrama inherits a robuster tradition. The sins with which it deals are real crimes, which end at Portland or the galleys. There is something at stake. There are lives in the balance. The Greeks, also, knew that it needed such material as this to make a great play. They dealt for choice with a parricide or a

THE DECAY OF MELODRAMA

matricide, or hung their tragedy on the sack of a city or a human sacrifice. It is in these footprints, if he did but know it, that the melodramatist treads. His benevolent convict is a Prometheus Bound. His wicked earl with one fair daughter is a lineal descendant of Agamemnon. He is right to eschew innovation. The great themes of tragedy were long ago discovered. The primitive myths of the long-lost child, the birth-mark and the forbidden marriage, these are the things which natural man has cared to hear of since first he sought in ordered speech to tell his rarer experiences. For it is the chance of such happenings as these which is the salt of life. Life is for the simple man a lottery in which none of the numbers count, save the fatal number which is drawn. He endures in daily life the barren tedium, in which there are no coincidences and rarely a complication. When he goes to the theatre it is with the demand that one of these portents shall happen there. It happens, he applauds, and comes away. The wisdom of the ages, the experience of unnumbered generations, has once more been confirmed.

MICROMANIA

MICROMANIA is a disease whose importance lies in the fact that it does not exist. The word has no place in the jargon of physicians, and it is with a full sense of the tremendous responsibility incurred, that this article offers it a tentative currency. It is a purely hypothetical ailment. The madness which exaggerates has made history, but there is no record of an insane passion for the petty. The megalomaniac is always with us; but who has ever known a victim of micromania? No experiment could induce it, but there is much to be learned from speculation on the reasons which make it impossible. It does, to be sure, make a spurious and imitative appearance in actual life. Men do, in fact, yield to the obsession of what is tedious, petty, and uninteresting, but the mere exercise of dwelling on the trivial, converts it insensibly into something grandiose and exciting.

MICROMANIA

Benvenuto Cellini's jailer, for example, imagined that he was a bat. That was, at first sight, a very fair attempt to ape *micromania*. Why choose a creature so obscure, so small, so dingy? A man with a genuine passion for the trivial might very well have begun in this way. But the obstinate megalomania that is in us all, asserted itself before the shy malady, in whose pursuit we have set out, had well seized its victim. This admirable jailer, a pattern, as Benvenuto tells us, of all that is of good repute in ordinary life, could not divest himself of the innate tendency to exaggeration which lies at the root of the daily virtues. He was not content to be a bat. He conceived himself as a gigantic bat, nay, even as the king of the bats, and a vast contempt seized him, when it occurred to him that Cellini also was a bat, but an entirely spurious specimen. Thus does our megalomania peep out under the most cunning disguises. In our cradles it invests our toes with a vast significance. It makes of a narrow grave the portal of eternity. In the interval it rules our lives.

It must not be supposed that the ingenuity of human nature has made no

ON VARIOUS THEMES

protest against this besetting tendency. Positivism was a sort of protest against the megalomania of the eternities and immensities, but it ended dismally enough, in the discovery of a Great Fetish and the worship of Humanity. Asceticism is a worthier effort, but the saint who dwells most obstinately on the pettiness of human life, does so only to exalt his idea of some loftier Power. The cult of humility is a wholly spurious micromania. The flagellant is never content to think himself a contemptible creature. It is always the most abandoned sinner whom he scourges in his own person. Even the gentler forms of Pietism never lose the thought that the meek shall inherit the earth. Of all pseudo-micromanias the most nearly convincing is that of the literary decadent. He shuns the positive, the loud, and the obvious. He flees from the sublime as from a plague. He toys with the petty, the idyllic, the detail. But in all this, the purpose of his art is to suggest the things he fears. The secret of being elusive is to fall short of success.

It is in its thoughts of death and the after-life that humanity riots most gladly in megalomania. Here at least there is no

MICROMANIA

attempt at evasion. When it dreams of punishment it revels in horror. When it thinks of reward, it scorns measure and proportion. It admits no mean between eternity and extinction, and each alternative inspires it with an equal awe. There have been German philosophers who pointed out that the vulgar notion of eternity, mere continuance and repetition, the endless monotony of spaces and times, is insufferably tedious, but they have done so only by way of recommending some vastly superior infinity of their own invention. Only once in human history has it been suggested that eternity may be something quite trivial and commonplace. But the man who fathered that thought was only what Tweedledee would call a thing in our dream. His name is Svidrigailoff, but he exists only in that most unsubstantial of all human habitations, a realistic novel. But as he is the one micromaniac of whom we have any record, the utmost must be made of his case. He was an interesting personality, who had probably committed a murder in his youth, besides beating his wife, and drinking abnormal quantities of champagne. In such unworthy shells may originality harbour. Fedor

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Dostoievsky is his creator, and his record is to be found in the amazing pages of *Crime and Punishment*. His revelation is contained in a single outburst in one chance conversation :

‘Men always represent eternity as an incomprehensible idea, as a something immense—immense ! But why should this necessarily be the case ? Imagine, on the contrary, a small room—a bath-room if you will—blackened by smoke, with spiders in every corner. What if that were eternity ! I often conceive it to be so.’

Imagine for a moment the effect of this utterance at some public gathering, where all the innate megalomania of our species is reinforced and multiplied. The more tolerant would exclaim, as his interlocutor does in the novel, ‘The man must be mad.’ Others would mob him, while those who kept their heads, would reply that Mr Svidrigailoff was a wife-beater and a drunkard. But, despite these desperate efforts, the temperature of the great assembly would be sensibly lowered and the audience would disperse, wondering whether this uncomfortable Russian gentleman might not, after all, be akin to the child in Hans Andersen who pointed out that the Emperor wore no clothes. Bathrooms henceforth

MICROMANIA

would gain a new terror, and spiders cause a shudder which the death's-head of the romantic ages can no longer excite.

Mr Svidrigailoff has broken the unanimity of nations, and on reflection it will be admitted that his scandalous life does not suffice to explain him away. Wife-beating is a common phenomenon which has never yet been known to result in micromania. His conduct was mediocre. It is his contribution to the world's stock of really original ideas that concerns us. No thinker has ever yet suggested that eternity may be mean and trivial. The Greeks sometimes came near it, when they described the strengthless heads of the dead, impotent, undignified, and mindless. But they spoiled a promising idea by grafting on to it the Oriental notion of torments, and clearly they thought of Hades as something rather terrible than commonplace. The modern spiritualist certainly dabbles in triviality. His ghosts are as tedious as Mr Svidrigailoff's spiders, but then he lacks the courage of his bathos. He so obviously intends to be sublime. But the more human thought hovers round this doctrine of the spiders, the more original and daring will it appear.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

We have all been evading it with such unwearying skill.

It is not to be expected that Mr Svidrigaïloff will have disciples. His conjecture may be neither more nor less plausible than those which have found favour. But it is contrary to human nature as we know it. There have been races which acknowledged grubby divinities and idealised tree-stumps. But they have made no headway. The megalomaniacs have crushed them out, or 'raised' them from their natural degradation. Indeed, it is probable that they, too, had a lie in the blood, though of a blundering and pedestrian type. The adventurer among ideas would search in vain for micromania among the hieroglyphics of the Nile or the tablets of Assyria. Only the Imperial races have left such records, and conquest is inconsistent with the cult of the petty. If there were Little-Egyptians, it is certain that they raised no pyramids. On the whole we must conclude that Mr Svidrigaïloff is a unique phenomenon. Since the world began there has been but one micromaniac, and even he had no existence in fact. But precisely on that account he is invaluable to science. Without him our megalomania

MICROMANIA

might have remained unconscious and unrecognised. He is the necessary index to the sublimity of our nature. But for his hint of the eternal bathroom, the current eschatologies, so unanimous in their exaggerations, might themselves have seemed commonplace and inevitable. Thackeray shed tears at the slum-child whom he found singing 'There is a happy land' in the gutter on a rainy day. Not less pathetic is the comfortable churchwarden, lost in the petty, the trivial, and the sordid, who none the less conceives a stupendous hereafter. We are all of us Falstaffs, townsmen and tavern-haunters, who at death 'babble of green fields.'

LITTLE JIM

IT was the good fortune of the writer of these lines, an Englishman by birth, to spend his boyhood and his youth, an exile in a foreign country. That foreign country, admitted, indeed, the sway of Queen Victoria; but in all else it went its own way, ignorant and even contemptuous of the venerable institutions which have made England what she is. There are to-day, I believe, Anglicising schools even in Scotland, which, under the guidance of masters trained south of the border, are rapidly transforming the morals and manners of the middle-classes.

In my day they were still unknown. We grew up in our remote seaport, in all the traditional independence of mind which makes the Scot so obnoxious, so aggressive, and so successful. We knew nothing of 'tone' or 'good form,' or of that morality of caste and obedience which in England

LITTLE JIM

masters and elder boys impose upon the plastic minds of the young. Among us there was no uniformity, nor did we even regard uniformity as an ideal. We went to our masters for instruction in definite subjects, as grown men go to teachers of foreign languages and sciences. Some we despised, others we admired and respected, but none of them would have dared to impose upon us a police of morals and manners.

The playground was our own kingdom. We did as we pleased in it, and not what we were told. Sometimes we played football, sometimes we rehearsed Bannockburn or Flodden Fell. Sometimes, in our later years, we argued hotly and eagerly about Atheism or Socialism, and the creation of the world.

We were of all classes and origins. Farmer's sons, and sailor's sons, rubbed shoulders with the children of the manse, and the progeny of our dignified Lord Provost. The janitor's boy, whose mother sold us milk and buns at lunch time, moved among us as happily as the headmaster's son, and the heirs of retired Colonels and Anglo-Indian officials. It was a world in which even eccentricity could thrive, and individuality command respect.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

For many a year the life of the typical English school had been to me a closed and mysterious book. Its products impressed me as the Jesuits impress Protestants, or as Freemasons impress Catholics—*men, indeed, and even countrymen, but beings whose alien habits of thought caused them to inhabit a world in which I had no foothold.*

But the other day a neighbour of mine, who was to me Little Jim, and has now become Smith Minor, entered what is known as 'a preparatory school,' where his morals are being rapidly formed, against his promotion, four or five years hence, to the distant glories of a Public School. We are intimate friends, and through his eyes I am learning to gaze with wonder and, I trust, with reverence at the 'complicated social structure which is in process of absorbing him.

We, in my boyhood, were all free and equal at school. Little Jim moves about, an undistinguished unit, in a rigid hierarchy of seniority. The 'chief personages in his little world are resplendent and terrible beings, armed at once with the majesty of the law and the might of physical force.

LITTLE JIM

They rejoice in the name of Prefects. These awful beings, I gather, are chosen neither for their wisdom nor their prowess. They grow to their dignity by the mere process of staying long enough in the school. They wield an unchallenged power. They may strike any boy, but it is an offence against the school itself to strike them. They may 'report' or denounce any boy, but no mere boy may report or complain of them. If Little Jim had been a middy in an old-fashioned ship, or a child-worker in an unregenerate factory, he could not have been broken more effectually on the wheel of authority.

The odd part of it is that, despite his Scotch blood, and a very obstinate and independent temperament, Little Jim appears to enjoy the system. He announces his intention of staying longer at school than anyone else, so that he, in turn, with all the glory of 'head boy' and prefect, shall have the right to strike without fear and to 'report' with impunity. Meanwhile he uses such advantages as the system offers. Before he went to his English school he was a redoubtable fighter, who would wrestle even with his seniors. Now he 'reports'

ON VARIOUS THEMES

even smaller boys who assail him. In my school days 'reporting' was called tale-bearing, but indeed it was rarely mentioned, for it was virtually unknown. The 'prefects,' since little Jim may neither fight them nor report them, he bribes. It appears that most of them collect stamps. Little Jim comes raiding my writing table in quest of foreign letters and newspapers, and bears the spoil away to conciliate authority. When he told me that my stamps were destined for a certain prefect, one Brown Maximus, I asked whether Brown was a general favourite or a special friend of his own.

'No,' came the answer. 'I don't like him. Nobody likes him. I hardly ever speak to him.'

But, still, it is on the redoubtable, the unpopular Brown that the school lavishes stamps. 'The shades of the prison-house' are gathering very obviously round Little Jim. He is already in his eighth year, a man of the world.

The result is that Little Jim, who was born a Scotchman, a democrat, and a natural Protestant, with an appalling faith in the value of his private judgment, will presently

LITTLE JIM

be, despite his name, and the lingering tones of a broad Lowland accent, a member of the English upper-middle class. Already he would be quite at his ease in the mess-room of the Grenadier Guards. He would take his tone from his colonel and his captains, as he takes it to-day from his prefects and the head boy. He would take his share in 'the life of the regiment,' as he takes it to-day in 'the life of the school,' for he has grasped that fundamental fact of English society, that 'life' means play.

We played at our Scotch school, as we pleased, and if we pleased. We improvised; we invented games; we escaped in our games from the routine and discipline of the school. Little Jim plays by the time-table from two of the afternoon to sun-down, under the eye of masters, and he realises that his games are among his most solemn, his most sternly regulated social duties. In due course he will be quite ready to tell a contemporary who studies instead of playing, as the Major told the studious Lieutenant in the latest 'ragging' scandal, that he 'would not be seen dead in the same street with him.'

As I used to know him he had a whim-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

sical and original fancy which he exercised without rein or restraint. Now he begins to bow to an organised public opinion. It used to be with him a favourite delight to dress himself in an old Greek uniform which I possess—a uniform with a bullet hole in it—and on the top of it he would wear an Albanian cloak which has weathered the storms of Pindus. In this guise he would sally forth and swagger past nurse-maids and policemen, waving a great Albanian staff over his head. On the last occasion that he donned this disguise, however, he hesitated. He was as ready as ever to face the police. But how if he should meet a 'prefect,' who would, of course, 'report' him? Of Mrs Grundy he knows nothing. Her venerable name is 'prefect.'

Poor Little Jim! I see your eager spirit draping itself in a uniform which will last you longer than my old Greek rags, a uniform which you cannot discard at will, a uniform which will mould your mind to its ill-cut lines. In time you will be as proud of it as you are to-day of my Albanian cloak. You will think to pattern and feel to pattern. You will assume at once the caste morality of any society which you enter. You will

LITTLE JIM

see a 'prefect' in every man who can advance you or command you, and bow to them with a habit bred betimes. If you become a doctor, you who play to-day so prettily and tenderly with my cat and her kittens, you will vivisect as your seniors do. If you enter the Army you will 'rag' with the best of them, to impose 'the life of the regiment' upon any unfortunate who aspires to something better. If you are an employer, you who have never mixed, as was your Scottish birthright, with poor men's sons and bursars from village schools, you will hold by the prejudices and the blindnesses of your kind, secure in the class morality which you have learnt. Had they sent you to that simple school in that Northern seaport you would have emerged an individual. Here in London you will become a member of a caste.

THE OKAPI AND THE FINANCIER

A fine example of that rare and interesting animal the Okapi (*Okapia Johnstoni*) has recently been acquired by the Hon. Walter Rothschild for his collection at Tring. The modelling has been entrusted to Mr Ward, of Piccadilly.—*The Daily Papers*.

It happened on an afternoon of early summer that Socrates had left the city and journeyed towards Colonus. The day was hot, so that even the young nuts of the almond seemed parched, and beneath the leaves of the prickly artichoke there scarce was moisture. 'Let us turn aside,' said Socrates, 'for hereabouts should be the house of the Metic Erythraspis, and I have heard that in his garden he has many a wonderful thing which he is willing to show to strangers.' Erythraspis received us with much courtesy, and when Socrates proposed that we should visit his garden, he was visibly flattered. 'Indeed, Socrates,' said he, 'I have long wondered that you who seek after wisdom have not come sooner to see my garden.'

THE OKAPI AND THE FINANCIER

‘Oh!’ said Socrates, smiling gently, ‘If I had known that wisdom was here in your garden, I should not have dallied. Is she in yonder cage, or have you stuffed her there among the dead things?’

‘Nay,’ said Erythraspis. ‘You jest at me, but I thought that you wise men were always gathering and collecting, and here you will find that I have gathered and collected every sort of animal and placed a label over each.’

‘Indeed,’ said Socrates. ‘I spend my life inquiring after wisdom; but here is Erythraspis who knows all about it. So a wise man must gather and collect?’

‘Indeed he must,’ said he, ‘and spare no money in the task.’

But Erythraspis would not stand to be questioned. He had Socrates by the gown, and was busily leading him from one cage to another. In one of these he had placed an eagle. ‘See,’ said he, ‘there is not another of these eagles in Attica.’

‘Tell me,’ said Socrates, ‘what is it you admire about this eagle?’

‘Oh!’ quoth Erythraspis, ‘that is easily answered. Do you not know that his wings are the strongest of any bird that is, and that

ON VARIOUS THEMES

he can gaze, when he is poised in mid-air, upon the very face of the sun ?'

'I have heard that, too,' said Socrates, 'but tell me, does your bird fly well ?'

'Indeed,' answered Erythrasis, 'I have taken good care that he shall not ; his wings are clipped.'

'Then perhaps you keep him to gaze upon the sun ?'

'Nay,' said the Metic, 'Do you not see that his house is roofed ?'

'Then I suppose it must be for some other quality that you keep him for our admiration?' began Socrates, but already Erythrasis had hurried us to a little hut where a stag was pacing up and down. 'See,' said he, 'you would not admire my eagle, but of all four-footed beasts this stag is the swiftest.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'I suppose you keep it for running.'

'I have forgotten,' said the Metic, 'why we keep it in the collection, but if you will look at the label on its cage you will learn all about it. I have a secretary for these things.'

At this we all looked at the label, which explained that the animal had a backbone, two stomachs, and cloven hoofs.

THE OKAPI AND THE FINANCIER

‘So that is why you keep the stag?’ asked Socrates.

‘I suppose so,’ answered Erythrasspis. ‘I have often remarked that the fact which we think important about an animal is hardly noticed by the wise men who make my labels. Now, this animal refused to quit its young when we captured it and fought until they were killed. And this I thought remarkable. But the wise men only cared about its backbone.’

While he was saying this, however, Erythrasspis was leading us towards his house.

‘And now,’ said he, ‘I am about to show you the most valuable thing I have, a stuffed unicorn.’

‘And why,’ said Socrates, ‘is it so valuable?’

‘Well,’ said the other, ‘it is the only one in Hellas, and it cost me a thousand talents.’

‘But why,’ said Socrates, ‘is it valuable?’

‘My dear sir,’ said the Metic, ‘what costs a thousand talents is valuable. Only reflect. To obtain this unicorn, millions of men were working to store money in my bank, and I had to pay the sailors and the travellers and the hunters who went to fetch it, with all their carriers and camp-followers.’

ON VARIOUS THEMES

‘It must indeed be a very precious thing,’ answered Socrates. ‘Can you tell me why men value it so?’

‘Because it is expensive,’ retorted the other.

‘But in general,’ answered Socrates, ‘you will find that articles are expensive because of some other quality. What quality is it that makes men desire a stuffed unicorn?’

‘Indeed, I do not know,’ said the Metic, laughing.

‘Erythraspis has not been very long in the city,’ said Socrates, ‘and these are things which one hears from one’s father and he from his. Shall we tell him why men prize the unicorn, and regard it as a valuable and interesting thing? He shall answer us and tell us if we are right.’

‘I am ready,’ said he.

‘Well,’ continued Socrates, ‘I seem to have heard, when I was very young, of a great forest beyond the Nile, into which not even the priests of Egypt had penetrated.’

‘Yes,’ answered the other, ‘and if only we could get there it might be full of the most priceless trees.’

‘And in this forest there lived a sacred animal which few have seen and none

THE OKAPI AND THE FINANCIER

possessed. It dwelt in solitude where the trees were thickest, and there it reared its young. Its skin was striped, like the earth when the shadows of the branches fall upon it. It had a single horn, and in shape resembled in some respects a horse and in others a stag. The less men knew of it the more they talked of it, and it became a legend and a myth. Two years ago a traveller sent home a drawing of it, but as yet it had never been seen among ourselves. Men told their children of it, as they tell them of the phoenix and the chimæra, and the children were glad because the beast was strange and unknown, and in dreams at night they went in search of it. What shall we say then? Why was it valuable? Shall we say that it was valued because it was unknown and mysterious?’

‘Yes,’ answered the Metec, ‘that must be the reason.’

‘Now tell me, Erythraspis,’ said Socrates, ‘when men gather herbs in the woods, is it for some quality which the herbs possess only in the fields, or do they also retain this quality when they are dried and preserved?’

‘I think,’ said Erythraspis, ‘for some quality which they retain.’

‘And tell me if they fetch silver from

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Laurium, is it for some quality which the silver possesses only in Laurium, or does it also retain it in Athens?’

‘Surely, Socrates,’ answered he, ‘the silver is even brighter and purer when it is melted and refined in Athens.’

‘And when they fetch pearls from the Great King’s seas, do the pearls retain the quality which they possessed originally?’

‘Assuredly they do.’

‘In every case, then, where men go abroad to collect something rare and valuable, they do it because the thing will retain that quality, or even possess it in a yet more remarkable degree?’

‘Surely that is so,’ answered Erythraspis. ‘No one would be such a fool as to gather pearls at the risk of his life if they grew dull and ugly in Athens.’

‘Tell me, then, what did we say just now was the quality for which men prized the unicorn?’

‘I think we said because it is mysterious.’

‘You are right. And are the mysterious things those which are known or those which are unknown?’

‘Surely the unknown.’

‘And are the mysterious things those which we can see and touch and handle?’

THE OKAPI AND THE FINANCIER

‘To tell the truth, Socrates,’ said Erythraspis, with a laugh, ‘I know little about the mysteries. We Metics are not admitted to Eleusis. But I think the mysterious things are those which we cannot see and handle.’

‘How then,’ quoth Socrates. ‘Your unicorn was mysterious, and that is why men valued it. You have brought it here, scraped its skin, stuffed it with straw, and it is there for all of us to see and touch. Have you not destroyed its value?’

‘O Socrates,’ quoth the other, ‘you shall not persuade a Metic that he has made a bad bargain. I believe you are only piquing me to show you a still greater treasure. You have heard of Marsyas, have you not?’

‘Indeed, I have,’ said Socrates. ‘Could he not make music better than all save Apollo?’

‘I believe so,’ said he. ‘Well, it is said that Apollo flayed him. You must not believe that. You know that we Metics can make your chroniclers tell what stories we please. It was we who flayed him, and in there—but do not tell anyone—I have got him stuffed.’

‘And does he still make music?’ asked Socrates.

THE INSPIRATION OF GRAND-FATHERS

‘I should now like to define my personal standpoint in regard to the doctrine of Revelation, as I have at various times explained it to you, my dear Hollmann, and to other gentlemen. I distinguish between two different kinds of revelation—namely, a continuous, that is to say, historic, one, and a purely religious one. As to the former I do not entertain the slightest doubt that God reveals Himself . . . now in this, now in that great sage, priest, or King . . . Hammurabi was one of these; Moses, Abraham, Homer, Charlemagne, Luther, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kant, and the Emperor William the Great were others. These he has chosen and deemed worthy of His grace to perform sublime and eternal things according to His will.’—The Kaiser’s letter on Revelation (1903).

TO HIS MAJESTY KAISER WILHELM II
SIRE,—In the interests of truth, and with the view of advancing those sound principles of social stability which your Majesty has at heart, we venture with all humility to address you on behalf of the Chinese community in your city of Berlin, which said community, in consideration of the stupendous interests at stake, has authorised us to

INSPIRATION OF GRANDFATHERS

approach you in its name. We have read your gracious edict on revelation with becoming deference and humility. We confess that your gracious expositions of the Christian religion, a subject which has always engaged our enlightened and respectful curiosity, had hitherto proved too difficult for our limited comprehension. Our knowledge of the German language is, perhaps, defective, and, from whatever cause, our studies have hitherto failed to lead us to a clear result. We carefully weighed your exhortation to your Majesty's gallant troops to give no quarter in the name of Christ during the late disturbances in China, without, however, succeeding in extracting from it a principle capable of enlightening our understandings. In the present instance the case is quite otherwise. We note with profound satisfaction your clear statement of the fact that your august grandfather, Kaiser Wilhelm I, enjoyed inspiration, and was a chosen instrument of the Deity, of whose attributes he, therefore, in some sense partook. It is true that you mention this without calling the attention of Admiral Hollmann to the fact that the late Emperor was your Majesty's grandfather.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

We are doubtless correct in assuming that this omission, which we hasten to supply, was due (1) to your Majesty's conspicuous modesty, and (2) to the circumstance of which your Majesty cannot be ignorant, that Admiral Hollmann is well aware that Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse was your illustrious Majesty's grandfather. We think we may also claim that on no other ground can you have included him in the list which you have so graciously been pleased to draft. It is not to the fact that this exalted individual was an Emperor that he owes his inclusion in this catalogue. Louis Napoleon was also an Emperor. Nor would his status as a German Emperor entitle him to this position, since you omit to include your illustrious father, who acquired merit no less by begetting his son than by vacating his throne. Nor does the appellation of 'the Great' which you have bestowed on your grandfather account for this fresh honour. Frederick, the friend of Voltaire, also enjoyed this distinction. The late Emperor's policy and his victories hardly account for this honour, since you include neither Bismarck nor Moltke in your list. And, finally, the fact that he himself claimed to

INSPIRATION OF GRANDFATHERS

be an instrument in God's hands is not in itself decisive, since the regicide Cromwell did the same. We are therefore driven, by a process of exclusion, to conclude that we have rightly interpreted your Majesty's thought in supposing that the Kaiser Wilhelm I owes his apotheosis to the fact that he is your Majesty's grandfather.

Our object in approaching your Majesty at this juncture is to urge upon your judgment the advantages which would result from a more universal enunciation of this great dogma. The attribute of being a grandfather is one which the late Emperor shared with multitudes of human beings. If this attribute and that of inspiration are inseparably connected, it follows that all grandfathers are inspired. This tenet has long been the foundation of social order in China, and your Majesty's recognition must speedily establish it in the West. We need not enlarge on the advantages which would result on the proclamation of a universal religion. It is a project which must at once commend itself to your Majesty's ardent and generous spirit. Your object is, we take it, not to establish any definite moral teaching, since you are silent on this aspect of

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Christianity. Your concern is rather to set the principle of authority on a sure and universal basis. We submit to you that none can be more permanent or more general than that which reposes on the deification of grandfathers. Here, too, is to be found a cure for all those social evils, and notably the spirit of disobedience and innovation, which your Majesty has so consistently rebuked. We have noted with pain the ambitious and undisciplined temper which prevails among some sections of your Majesty's subjects. Indeed, the official Press bureau which composed your sacred books has traced the discords of nations to the fact that the Reichstag has recently become a Tower of Babel. We submit, sire, that the remedy lies in the deification of grandfathers. This great reform would at once substitute for the restless aspirations of mankind one consuming ambition--~~the desire~~ to become a grandfather. Would the Rev. Dr Delitzsch have questioned your authority, if his thoughts had been centred on this great purpose? We believe not. Even Herr Babel would abandon his effort to shine by the exercise of his subversive eloquence. For to become a grandfather it is not re-

INSPIRATION OF GRANDFATHERS

quisite to struggle with the rest of mankind to produce some new idea, some disturbing discovery, some superfluous reform. Without mental effort every man may hope to become a grandfather, and thus to reach the summit of human striving—the dignity of inspiration. Your Majesty is rightly concerned lest your Brandenburgers should be led astray by the new gospel which Herr Delitzsch has propounded. But if Herr Delitzsch could have attained the rank and dignity of an inspired prophet without the fatigue of propounding a new gospel, is it conceivable that he would have undertaken a labour so superfluous? It might be supposed by a superficial critic that this doctrine of all but universal inspiration might lead to the multiplication of creeds. On the contrary, it is the only means which will ever prevent the invention of new opinions. This is, indeed, obvious to anyone who will take the pains to consider that vanity has nothing to gain from innovation, if it has but to wait a matter of fifty or sixty years for the satisfaction of its most importunate dreams. The absence of new opinions from China during a period of 3,000 years sufficiently confirms this theory. The effect

ON VARIOUS THEMES

of this reform would be, in short, to make it the object of every man to attain premature senility, a condition which must greatly favour the maintenance of the principle of authority which your Majesty has proclaimed. Your Majesty will at once perceive that this reform would in itself suffice to crush at one blow Atheism, Constitutionalism, Feminism, Socialism—in a word, every movement which menaces your Majesty's ascendancy.

We are, Sire,
Your Majesty's humble servants,
YUNG LU
(Grandfather),
WEN SU
(Expectant About-to-be-Grandfather).

THE GOATHERDS—A PRISON ALLEGORY

A MAN of real vitality is great not only in what he does, but in what he sees. We all walk through the same world with the same dust heaps and the same battlefields ; but it is somehow the little men who experience, even when they are free, the little and the trivial things, and the great men who, even in prison, have seen the dramas and high moments of life.

There was a man named Luigi Settembrini, who saw in gaol one of the grandest and most primitive deeds in all the annals of humanity. It stands in none of the history books, and the very names of the actors are unknown. But Settembrini was the man who deserved to see it.

He had many titles to fame. In the first place, he had struggled against a tyranny, and I sometimes think that by no other activity can a man attain to the full stature

ON VARIOUS THEMES

of humanity. In the second place, he was alive and young in 1848, and save in Russia, few human beings have ever been quite alive since 1848. In the third place he had been condemned to death by a despot and was rescued by his own son—circumstances which alone might have made him happy, and in combination must have rendered him insufferably proud.

He was, in brief, a Neapolitan professor, one of the innumerable victims of King Bomba, sentenced first to the gallows and then to life-long imprisonment for writing a pamphlet of genius. He escaped in the end. His son went on board the ship on which he was confined, donned the uniform of an English officer, and forced the captain to sail for the shore of Ireland. Settembrini, in short, was worthy of a great experience.

The experience came to him in this way. Shut up in one of those prisons about which Gladstone wrote, with a crowd of common malefactors, he was one night standing in its courtyard with the rest of its inmates. It was Italian weather, and Settembrini forgot his miseries in gazing at the stars—the one landscape which the walls could not exclude, the one sublimity which no cell could belittle.

THE GOATHERDS

Near him were two goatherds, ordinary criminals sharing unworthily the honour of King Bomba's hospitality. They, too, seemed lost in the beauty of the sight. They began to talk and Settembrini overheard.

'What a lot of stars!' said the first goatherd. 'I wish I had as many sheep as there are stars in the sky.'

'Nay,' said the other, 'what would you do with them? You could not feed them.'

'I'd pasture them in your meadows,' the first goatherd replied.

'No, you should not,' answered the other.

In two minutes one of the goatherds had stabbed the other to death.

The story may be told in ten lines, and the beauty of it is that each man will make his own commentary. For it is a story that germinates and ferments in the mind. It pulls the ~~four~~ corners of the world together; it frames itself at once into an allegory of human life. It is the sort of story which Plato would have made immortal, and painted as a companion picture to the Cave-Dwellers.

I can think of no prettier theme for an ethical debate. It ought, for example, to

ON VARIOUS THEMES

move an idealist to enthusiasm. For what a proof it is of the grandeur of the human mind! Philosophers have called man the risible animal, for in the power to laugh he demonstrates his superiority over the constraints of fact and the ties of necessity, makes himself a judge over creation, and dismisses the universe with a smile.

But here in this power to quarrel over a hypothesis, there is a yet more glorious demonstration of the grandeur of the human intellect. The dogs in a Turkish street will quarrel and murder, if one mongrel has overstepped the limits of his quarter, and sought for garbage or begged a charity a yard beyond the boundary of his acknowledged haunt. But only men can quarrel and murder, because one has declared that if all the stars were sheep and all these sheep were his, he would pasture them in the other's meadow. To man alone an hypothesis can become a passionate reality.

A dog can understand a real injustice. Only a man can use his knife to avenge an imaginative wrong. Put him in prison and you cannot deprive him of action. Sequester his goods, and he will still be an overman

THE GOATHERDS

among the stars. He will launch his argosies for a myth, embattle his armies for an idea, stab his comrade for the food of a star. Reality cannot confine him, nor fact fetter his emotions. In a tyrant's prison he counts the Milky Way his riches, and feeds his flock beside Orion.

And it is the species that is great. The learned, the wise, the philosopher, the theologian may provoke a thirty years' war for a theory of Transubstantiation. But an illiterate Neapolitan herdsman can stab for an hypothesis. Man, indeed, is the imaginative animal.

I have told my story. It is for the reader to choose his commentary. We are all in our cradles Platonists or Aristotelians, and suck in Liberalism and Toryism with our milk. But we are also either megalomaniacs or micromaniacs. I have written ~~a~~ commentary ~~for~~ megalomaniacs—whom it is polite to call idealists; I will write another for micromaniacs—whom it is polite to call realists. And to them the story will tell its tale of the vanity of life and the folly of history.

How apt, how perfect, how admirably human, I hear them saying. Is it not in a

ON VARIOUS THEMES

prison that we do all our fighting? When we revolt and perorate for the rights of man, and unfurl our flags to win the Golden Fleece of our ideal, are we not in fact the captives of Bomba Nature's bow and spear? We can stab and kill in the courtyard of our prison, but the stars for which we fight are serenely above us.

'Why so hot, my little sir?' they say to us, as we murder for their sakes, as they said to Emerson emerging from a political meeting. We may defend our meadows and slaughter the usurper, but the starry sheep of justice and happiness and equality, will they come down to crop the grass which we water with our blood? The tyrant who would feed his flocks in our fields, can he shepherd them at will or call them from the skies? The patriot who would defend his pastures, is not he, too, the victim of illusion, battling for empty sheepcotes and unheeding flocks? If this heroic combat was real, is there anything more real? If a man may feel a passion for a star, can he count the flocks which he brands and washes, with any greater certainty?

Czars and Nihilists, Popes and heretics, they are all goatherds in a prison courtyard,

THE GOATHERDS

shedding each other's blood for the unattainable star. They cannot get out to pursue the star. They can only die for it. Man is indeed the unique animal. He is the animal of illusions.

THE SPORT OF WAR

Six regiments of cavalry enjoyed a few glorious moments on Saturday, somewhere on the Berkshire Downs. Boot to boot they charged each other, 'swearing and shouting.' One man was killed, and twenty more, with their legs and arms in splints and plaster of Paris, are lying on their backs to-day, telling admiring nurses and sympathetic reporters what a happy time they have had. Nobody seems to have heard the order to charge, and the only part which the generals had in the affair, was to ride in hot haste out of way of the thundering legions, who threatened to crush them in their shock. 'There was no ill-feeling in the matter,' says one of the injured troopers, but the same authority none the less, remarks that 'fortunately no swords were out, else the excitement would have led the men to use them.' There rarely is 'ill-feeling,' even in a real battle. The Lancers no more hated the Boers whom

THE SPORT OF WAR

they speared outside Ladysmith, than they hated the Guardsmen whom they rode down in Berkshire. The essential thing in war is not the hatred of the fanatic, but the excitement of the sportsman. With a good horse under him, a healthy, well-fed English lad can evidently engender all the necessary excitement of battle in a twenty minutes' gallop.

Saturday's ride in Berkshire is no new thing in the annals of warfare. Every European army has its traditions of murderous manœuvres. There is, for example, a spirited narrative in Prince Peter Kropotkin's reminiscences which tells of an adventure in which Alexander II was very nearly slaughtered in a furious charge by the Pages' Corps. He was watching a sham fight on foot, when an avalanche of these aristocratic youths bore down upon him with fixed bayonets, sweeping everything before them. They were educated men, and hardly one of them would have hesitated to give his life for the Autocrat who stood in the way of their charge. They were not on horseback like the English troopers on Saturday. Yet such was the passion and joy of motion, and the contagion

ON VARIOUS THEMES

of unanimous action, that they were quite incapable of halting or wheeling, or opening their ranks, even to save the life of the monarch whom they all adored. At the last moment he realised his danger, and ran. 'Why didn't he get out of our way before?' was all that the cadets said when the charge was over. Yet these same cadets would have torn any Nihilist to pieces who had threatened him. But they could not, and would not, renounce, even for his sake, the glory and fury of their charge.

The psychology of war is based in the end upon the possibility of this sort of unreason. A squadron charging and a squadron fleeing obey the same laws and the same impulses as a troop of wild horses or a pack of Gadarene swine. The soldier at such moments is merely a social animal, and all the training of discipline, all the trickery of uniforms and trumpet calls, serve only to make him less reflective, less individual, more abjectly obedient to the sentiment of the herd.

It is a naïve assumption that causes and ideals are the ultimate explanation of reckless bravery and self-sacrifice in battle. We read of the charge of the Light Brigade at

THE SPORT OF WAR

Balaclava, or of the Cuirassiers at Sedan, and it flatters our faith in humanity to think that they faced the guns under the conscious stimulus of duty or patriotism. That theory, if it is to be maintained, must somehow explain away such incidents as this Berkshire battle. Physically the facts are exactly parallel. You ride hard for twenty minutes ; amid the noise of the guns and the shouting of your comrades ; you neither know where you are going or what you are doing. Your horse and yourself obey the same impulse, for your horse like yourself is a social animal. Men and horses have been trained to move together, and it is the hot sense of a mass of living creatures animated by one purpose—whatever the purpose may be—which breeds the thing which we call in this connection courage. The sense of unity must be present, but there is little in history to suggest that in moments of real excitement the nature of the link is a matter of any consequence. I have heard Turkish soldiers shouting 'Allah!' as they charged, and a most terrifying sound it was. But I question very much whether in the moment of the rush these two syllables conveyed any theological meaning to their minds. They

ON VARIOUS THEMES

all yelled the same thing, and that was the main consideration, alike to them and to their foes. To us who heard it, it certainly did not suggest the wrath of God and the vengeance of His Prophet, but it did tell us that a host of excited bipeds were moving on us with one voice.

Most shibboleths have a meaning—outside the battlefield—but there are instances enough of shibboleths which did their work of excitement, without any apparent merit or meaning whatever. The ‘reds’ and the ‘greens,’ who used to fight in the streets of Constantinople over the claims of rival charioteers, had found their bond of union in an absolutely fortuitous and external distinction. Red and green had no esoteric significance, no appeal to the reason or the imagination, but all the reds marching together could none the less develop among themselves a fury of battle, which led them to risk their lives for the sake of massacring all the greens. Greek theologians might perhaps attach in their narrow and decadent minds some shadowy significance to the difference between homo-ousians and homoi-ousians. But I am quite sure that the Arian and Catholic mobs, who slaughtered

THE SPORT OF WAR

each other for that difference, were wholly innocent of its meaning and its nature. The bond of union was purely verbal. Persons calling themselves Arian found in the name a sense of unity which gave them in the mass the courage to fling themselves upon other persons who used the other name of Catholic. A badge, a name, a uniform, will do as much to inspire this animal courage as a sense of nationality or a genuine fanaticism.

When we read of French Cuirassiers charging German Uhlans, we think that it is patriotism which inspires them. When we see English Lancers charging English Guardsmen, we realise that a mere difference of uniform will excite the same passions. A crowd shouting 'To Berlin!' encounters a crowd shouting 'To Paris!' and they fall on each other—with or without ill-feeling. A crowd moving to Weathercock Hill meets a crowd moving to Aldershot, and all the phenomena of battle follow. The 'cause' may count for something, but it counts for less than the pace.

The place of a reasoned enthusiasm in war is rather on the march and at the bivouac than on the battlefield. For any cause, or for no cause at all, a troop of

ON VARIOUS THEMES

horsemen will charge, when once the pace has quickened their blood. But men will not starve for nothing, nor face the monotony between battles for nothing. The cause, perhaps, has its influence in calling out leadership. Cromwell's Ironsides, once drilled and trained and set in motion, would have charged as well for little-endianism as they did for the Parliament. But little-endianism would not have dragged Cromwell from his farm. Mercenaries will show the same courage in the field as volunteers, but they will not freeze as gladly under the stars or march as stoutly under the sun.

But even that generalisation must be qualified. It takes, as a rule, some force of sentiment, some patriotic or democratic ideal, to create a great army. But once created, the mere corporate spirit will hold it together and inspire it. The raw French levies, who astonished all Europe at Valmy in the first campaign of the Revolution, were inspired by a contagion which came of their common love of liberty and their common hate of kings. Twenty years after, they were still fighting as bravely under Napoleon against nationality and against liberty. They retained the sense of unity when the idea

THE SPORT OF WAR

which created it was dead. That this pretorian spirit, this regimental patriotism, can be created by discipline is the great discovery of modern militarism. So strong is it, that it will even over-rule ideas. The Irish Militia—men who set out from Dublin singing ‘God save Kruger,’ were among our best soldiers at the front. They meant to show that an Irish regiment could charge better than an English regiment, just as the Lancers meant to show that they could charge better than the Guardsmen, and they showed it quite gaily at the expense of Mr Kruger. Any motive will inspire military courage provided it be a motive which begets a sense of comradeship. The discovery of tyrants is that a uniform will serve as well as an idea.

AN INDIAN SAINT

TWENTY-TWO centuries have passed since the saintly Buddhist Emperor Asoka sent his missionaries two by two throughout the world to preach their gospel of compassion and renunciation. The Acts of these Apostles figure in none of our canons. Here and there a wandering scholar poring over a forged Epistle, or a fragmentary palimpsest, seems to touch the hem of their yellow robes. They pass him by, dim ghosts of the past, and with a reverent recognition he drops an offering into their beggar's bowl. Perhaps the Therapeutae learned from them, or the Essenes. Of a certainty we know only that strange tradition of the two Indian friars who burned themselves to death in Athens, to the amazement of all that was wise and learned in the city. But two-and-twenty centuries are but a long summer's day in the life of India. Among the mirages and illusions of life men

AN INDIAN SAINT

reckon, indeed, the coming of conquerors and Shahs. The Macedonian burst through the hills; the Persian and the Afghan, the Tartar and the Englishman followed through the gap. The Clives and the Curzons took their part in the shadow-play. But nothing that really matters has changed. A Continent still thinks with the same categories, bows to the same shrines, and meditates in a secular solitude upon the Many and the One. Only this has happened, that a more than Roman peace has opened, the road throughout the world for missionaries who will go out with the wallet and the scrip to preach the gospel which remains, for all the sects and the schools, essentially unchanged. Asoka's friars set out three centuries too soon. They should have waited for the moment which the Galileans chose. But what matters the delay of an aeon? The roads are open now; the same brown faces under the same yellow robes glow with the same enthusiasm; India has still the same message to send. It was a Brahmin, the Swami Vivekananda, who took up this thought, as though Asoka had dropped it but yesterday, and set out, a pilgrim on a Pacific liner, to talk of Indian religion at

ON VARIOUS THEMES

the Chicago Exhibition, as the Buddhist friars may have talked of it at the Olympic Games. The record of his life and ideas are before us to-day, in a strange, chaotic book by an English lady who became his disciple and buried her name and nationality under the title of Sister Nivedita. (*The Master as I Saw Him*, Longmans.) Let no one turn to this book in the hope of finding an orderly biography or a systematic exposition of ideas. It is the work of a mind which has saturated itself too profoundly in an exotic creed to be able to expound it to the profane. But the reader who will passively submit to the same process of saturation, who will read patiently from page to page, now repelled, now attracted, will in the end rise the wiser, wondering at a strange book, and ready, in his turn, to do reverence to a saintly life. The missionary made disciples. It may be, as generations succeed generations, that the world will listen. The propagandist of a changeless creed has no need of haste.

The personality of this Indian Saint had many facets. To some of his European hearers he must have appeared as a tolerant and rationalistic humanitarian. For all those

AN INDIAN SAINT

aspects of Indian thought and superstition to which our Theosophists have turned he had a profound contempt. Thaumaturgy he despised, and in the Gospels he found nothing difficult of belief save the miracles. He searched in every creed for its kernel of universal faith. Mohammedans revered him. He could recite from memory Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation*. His monks with a dramatic eclecticism appropriated to their own use every phase of belief and exaltation. They read Carlyle's *French Revolution* as if it had been a modern Book of Kings. They sat with shepherd's crooks round their Yule Log on Christmas Day to recite a *Gloria*. They fasted on Good Friday, and were scandalised to meet a Salvation Army officer who told them that General Booth's birthday was the only holy day he kept. Amid all their austerities, their meditations, and their rituals, a compassion for the poor and the oppressed was their guiding light, and service their dominant thought. One thinks of St Francis of Assisi, when one reads of the disciple who in his great pity sucked the sores of a leper that he might give him ease. There is a beautiful tale here of Vivekananda's wander-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

ings in America, which reveals the man in his gentleness and dignity. It often happened to him in the Southern States to be confounded with the negroes, and relegated to a Jim Crow car. A friend who knew how proud in fact he was of his Aryan ancestry and his Brahmin blood asked him why he did not explain that he was not the descendant of an African slave. 'What! Rise at the expense of another?' was all his answer. The brotherhood of which he was the beloved head had for its watchword a motto which rings like an Indian echo of Mazzini. 'Woman and the People,' was its constant care, and its unceasing efforts were directed to raising the status of the lower castes and the inmates of the Zenana. They founded hospitals. They went out in bands to work among the stricken peasants in time of plague and famine. They established schools for girls. They bade their missionaries, when they went among the peasantry, take with them a camera and a magic-lantern and some physical apparatus in order to accustom them to the elements of Western Nature-lore. Ascetics themselves, trained to the severest fasts and the harshest abstinences, they yet schooled their pupils, girls

AN INDIAN SAINT

and boys alike, in gymnastics and physical exercises.

But the sympathetic English student of Eastern religion will be grievously disappointed if he imagines that it is destined to develop on the lines of a vague and gentle Pantheism, a tolerant Unitarianism, which happens to take the Vedas instead of the New Testament as the object of its Higher Criticism and the victim of its spiritual vivisections. The Swami Vivekananda for all his gymnastics and his magic-lanterns, believed in all the gods of his Pantheon as literally as any naked yogi. In spite of his care for the poor and the downtrodden, he had a profound contempt for the Western way of striving to alter the material conditions of life. The idea of the progress of humanity he utterly rejected ; it is the individual soul which must change itself. Condescending though he did to take account of the external world, his real life was one of meditation and contemplation. He marvelled at Europeans who inveighed against the inhumanity of solitary confinement. 'Not till a man has been twenty years alone,' he would say, 'is he perfectly himself.' The mediæval prison cages at

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Mont Saint Michel called from him the one comment, 'What a place to meditate in!' One little anecdote told by his disciple seems to throw us back into a time two thousand years before the Chicago Exhibition. The ghosts of certain suicides, it seems, haunted him at one period of his life, and disturbed him by giving him false news that his mother was dead. He remonstrated, and they replied that they were too miserable to care for the difference between lying and truth. He went thereupon down to the sea, prayed for them, and, having nothing else to give, cast upon the waves the offering of a little sand—*exigui pulveris munera*. The ghosts were laid. Memory recalls Archytas in Horace and the drowned sailor's

licebit

Injecto ter pulvere curras.

So does the world stand still. But it is in the reading of his worship of Kālī that the European mind receives the shrewdest shock. Who has not read in youth of the Kalighat and its gory sacrifices? The missionary magazines of our childhood were filled with pictures of her hideous visage, of her necklet of human skulls, and her many arms brandishing two-edged swords. We

AN INDIAN SAINT

linked her name with that of Juggernaut. We saved our pence to convert her benighted devotees. When we sang of the land where 'only man is vile,' it was of Kali and her worshippers that we thought. What are we to make of this worship of The Terrible? How shall we read this saint of the austerities and the pities, this vegetarian and humanitarian, who coldly answers when he is questioned about the orgies of sacrifice to Kali, that he has no sympathy with mawkishness, and that 'a little blood is wanted to complete the picture'? It is at the first encounter an inexplicable contradiction.

The solution is simply that the Western mind, when it adopts Pantheism, is playing; the Indian is sincere. To him the Absolute is the knife as well as the victim. It is the prisoner and the hangman. It is the untempered wind, and it is the shorn lamb. We talk of the mystery of evil. We attempt to explain it. We try to evaporate it in some higher harmony. The Indian accepts the fact, and because it is a manifestation of the Infinite, he worships it as well. The Buddhist and the early Christian fell back upon non-resistance to evil. The Hindoo resists, for that is his function in the

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Universe, but when he falls he prays to the Power which slays. He is a reed, in Pascal's phrase, a conscious reed, a resisting reed, but he makes himself one with the storm that bends him. He will raise his dams against the flood, he will hunt the tiger, he will plot against the Englishman, but in them all he sees the Power of God. A saint in the Mutiny was slain amid his contemplations by an English soldier. 'And thou also art He,' he cried as he fell. All struggle is vain, yet struggle is decreed. A strong man will fight and worship as he falls. It is weakness which consoles itself with the mercy of God. That hope for favors, that flattery of Heaven, they are nothing but 'shopkeeping,' an attempt to play with the gods at the diplomacy of *Do ut des*. And so the votary of Kali sings:

I am not one of those
Who put the garland of skulls round Thy neck
And then look back in terror
And call Thee 'The Merciful.'
The heart must become a burial ground,
Pride, selfishness and desire, all broken into dust,
Then, and then alone, will the Mother dance there.

A saint one morning was bitten by a cobra. In the evening he said, 'I have had a message from the Beloved.' That is the

AN INDIAN SAINT

Gospel which the missionaries would bring us from India. Twenty-two centuries will pass again, and still we shall be a nation of 'shopkeepers.' We shall have labelled this strange creed. We shall know the climatic or physiological peculiarity which explains it. We shall have linked it with the precise shade of the Indian skin, or the precise shape of the Indian skull. In our self-confidence we shall still be sure of ourselves. Ours, as the Pragmatists say, is the creed 'that works.' Our Clives and our Curzons were not Pantheists. Ours is the Sceptre, the Power, and the Glory, and it follows that ours is also the truth. But once in a generation, unheeded, unread, an eminently un-English Englishwoman will write such a book as this to suggest that theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

ON WATERPROOF SKINS

TOWARDS the close of last week there appeared in one of the obscurer pages of *The Daily News* one of those reports which make the records of our police courts perhaps the best thing that is being done at present in English literature. It told the adventures of a poor man who was charged with the crime of standing stripped to the waist in the rain.

The explanation which he gave of this original performance was plausible and convincing. He had often maintained that he had a waterproof skin, and he had taken the only effective method which he could devise for convincing his more sceptical neighbours. The experiment was one which members of the more comfortable social strata have been accustomed to make with impunity from their earliest years. In the upper and middle classes it is a matter of common knowledge

ON WATERPROOF SKINS

that the skin is waterproof. It is a conviction which cannot be too widely propagated.

The magistrate, unfortunately, took a somewhat severe view of this crude demonstration of a commonplace, and remanded the poor fellow for seven days.

Thereupon he made an appeal to the better feelings of the Bench. He said that he had a cat and kittens at home, and asked in genuine distress what would become of them during his enforced absence. This ought to have convinced the magistrate that the man before him was not a criminal. Experience has shown that desperate criminals often have wives and children. It is a mistake to suppose that a man who has a wife and children has really given hostages to fortune, or signed the social contract. There is always someone, if it be only a relieving officer, who will look after your wife and child while you are in gaol. It is otherwise with cats. You cannot throw your kittens on the rates. A man who has once harboured a cat, especially if it be a female cat, has vowed himself to duty, taken a pledge to virtue, and bound himself over to be of good behaviour for the term of at least nine lives.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

To Englishmen who have never lived under a really savage despotism this method of dealing with eccentricity may seem natural. A ruthless intolerance towards individual vagaries seems an inseparable consequence of constitutional liberty.

I used to know a man in Turkey who was clearly own brother to the possessor of the waterproof skin, and there was not a caimakam or a bashibazouk in the whole land who would have laid a finger on him. Rain or fine he wore no clothes at all, and no magistrate even dared to ask what experiment he was conducting. He went about as safe and happy as any living statue in London, and he was not even reduced to professing to be a 'work of art.' It was generally recognised that he was a good man, albeit a little peculiar in his habits, and magistrates nodded pleasantly to him when he came their way.

Nor was his case at all peculiar. I knew a man in Monastir who thought that he was the Czar of Russia. He went about from café to café with a majestic stride, and even Turkish spies would find leisure in their hunt for Liberals and conspirators to humour his fancy and play courtier to him. In

ON WATERPROOF SKINS

England he would have led a miserable existence in some asylum nearly as wretched as Tsarskoe Selo itself, and enjoyed hardly more liberty than the potentate whom he aped.

The man with the waterproof skin is an extreme case. But the intense sense for order and uniformity which remanded him for seven days, is equally fatal in more subtle ways to the development of any marked form of individuality, any divergence from the normal bourgeois standard in morals and opinions.

Despotic government in Russia represents the violent and desperate effort of a society, which really has no fixed conventions, to preserve a certain stability in mere externals.

In England we can afford to be free in the relatively unimportant sphere of politics, because no one really wants to be free in the larger matters of the mind.

In Russia a man of the educated classes enjoys an absolute liberty in his speculative opinions and his private morals. In England an irresistible social pressure imposes 'correct' views of life, discourages speculation on the ultimate questions of religion and society, and, above all, punishes a bold dis-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

regard of convention in the most important of individual relationships.

In Russia Parnell would have been sent to Siberia at the opening of his career; he would not have been sent to Coventry at the end.

In Russia it needed something just short of a revolution to establish the Duma, but when it met, no one dreamt of excluding Atheists, as the English House of Commons tried to exclude Bradlaugh.

In Russia Maxim Gorky was imprisoned for a few days for writing Socialist leading articles; he was ostracised in the United States with the unanimous approval of a free people for living with a woman who is not his wife.

In Russia *The Daily News* is delivered on occasion with its leading articles blacked out by the Censor. In England it is Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna* that the Censor prohibits.

In Russia a Constitutional Liberal is never quite safe from administrative exile. But Tolstoy is allowed to preach fundamental Anarchism.

The contrast was stated very happily the other day in a passage of unconscious

ON WATERPROOF SKINS

humour by an able writer, Mr Bernard Pares, whose ambiguous glory it is to have produced the most English of all the too numerous books about Russia. Commenting on the undisciplined speculations and the unconventional lives of the Russian 'intellectuals,' he remarked that what they really suffer from, is, that they have not been 'kicked' in adolescence. For my part I would rather run the risk of being 'knouted' in mature life.

But this criticism really goes to the root of the matter. The English public school boy is 'kicked' into a uniformity and an orthodoxy of thought, which makes political liberty a very small risk indeed to the governing classes. The range of his subsequent variations from the correct type is severely limited. He may be Liberal, he may be Conservative; but he will not be unsportsmanlike, or anarchical, or Ibsene. * He will not question the humanity of fox-hunting, go behind the Ten Commandments, or doubt the morality of murdering in uniform.

The Russian schoolboy has not been 'kicked,' and he does all these things. He claims and receives a complete liberty of

ON VARIOUS THEMES

thought ; the consequence is, that as a man he is not allowed to vote. The English public school boy, on the other hand, does not want to think ; in manhood, therefore, he is always allowed a vote.

Human society aims at self-preservation, and finds its own devices for averting fundamental change. In England we invented the public school. In Russia they evolved the autocracy.

CONFESSIONS OF A JUROR

LIKE most useless anachronisms the Grand Jury contrives to survive behind a name of signal dignity. Collectively we had these qualifications for intervening in the fate of our fellow-creatures: that we had all paid our rates, that our names all began with the initial B, and that we all of us lived in a distant suburb which seems to contribute no criminals of its own to the calendar. One by one in a long file the fifty cases came before us in outline, an unmeaning record of perversity. It was crime through a fog, crime from behind a veil, mechanical, inhuman, incredible. The accused we never saw. The defence we never heard. It was our duty, because our names began with B, to declare that the impossible was probable, that the thing we could not understand had certainly taken place. No. 18 A—I have forgotten his insignificant name—had flung a stone through a £40

ON VARIOUS THEMES

plate glass window in broad daylight. Why, we could not guess. We only knew that he had done the same thing before and served 'time' for it. We framed our own definition of him—the unknown accused, lying somewhere beneath us, silent and invisible in his cell. No. 18 A is clearly the sort of man who does this sort of thing. 'True Bill,' said the foreman, and the other X's muttered 'presumably mad.' Number something else had lain in wait for his neighbour on the common stair and stabbed him in the dark. 'He must have had some provocation,' said a younger B. 'We can't go into that,' replied the older and the wiser letters. Witnesses in rags stammered out their timid stories, and four of them confessed that they could not read. A resplendent personage from Belgravia entertained us with a facetious account of a burglary. There was the usual pathetic slum wife, who implored us not to find against the drunken husband who had stabbed her. We hesitated over a long list of young lads found with 'jemmies,' in the neighbourhood of safes, until the official tempter, in a black gown, who managed the 'calendar' for us, consoled us with the assurance that it would

CONFESSIONS OF A JUROR

only mean Borstal. This great shop in Regent Street had a thieving clerk, and the other a porter with an appetite for articles of luxury. We asked what wages they received, uneasily aware that if we were to do our duty, we might have to find a true bill against the employer. But most of our cases were simple affairs of burglary, and usually the victim was himself a poor man. The unseen fellow-citizen whose rights we were defending had been caught red-handed, in a mean and trivial crime, his tools in one pocket, his loot in the other. Even the proud consciousness that our names began with B could not spur us to the mental feat of doubting that his was a suitable case to try.

So it filed before us, this procession of unfortunate names. We did our duty, which is the word that civilised men commonly apply to their more public violations of instinct. Whence they came, these un-honoured names, we knew not, and whither we sent them, we tried to forget. There rang all the while in my ears that grisly sentence from the Gospel which used to haunt my childhood, about the officer, the judge, and the tormentors. We did our

ON VARIOUS THEMES

part, and it is the essence of the system that each shall do his part and nothing but his part. We had taken our oath and donned our blinkers in the name of the Almighty God. The 'petty' jury will do its part, and the Judge move within his well-worn groove. Never in all the process will the criminal encounter a plain man unfettered by oaths. Never will his fellow-citizens pause to ask why they send him from officer to judge, and from judge to gaoler. Nor may we ask whether he will emerge a better man from the hard labour and the solitary confinement. To each wheel in the machine, the law has allotted a routine function. That drunken husband, when he has fed his empty mind on the unaided reflections that will brood amid ignorance and wrath in a lonely cell, will he come out to love and cherish the little, defenceless, straw-coloured mother into whose ribs he thrust his knife? Will he learn chivalry from stone walls, imbibe manhood from skilly, or school his heart to tenderness as he marches round the exercise-yard under the eyes of his warders? We plain men, whose names begin with B, we move, in our suburb, in a world of common-places where effects follow upon causes.

CONFESSIONS OF A JUROR

But in court we are, of all mystics, the most extravagant. We reckoned on a miracle when we shoved our fellow-citizen a stage further on the journey from the officer to the tormentors. We think, if we think at all, that the loss of liberty, of comfort, of society, of changing impressions, of the pageant of light and weather, can somehow achieve a reformation. The petty jury will be inspired by the same great faith, and the Judge himself will wear a wig and robe in token of the august part which he, too, plays in this mystery of punishment. The system has us all in its toils. It questions us and we answer meekly, never daring in our turn to take it by the throat. 'Is there a case for trial,' it asks us, and dutifully we have rendered the answer. But is there a use in punishment?

The case against punishment has commonly been argued by the romantics on sentimental grounds. They have taught us to think of the typical criminal as a Jean Valjean, brave, capable, and strong, who wanted from society, not so much the chance to grow and to reform himself, as the invitation to step up higher and to play the superman as mayor and employer. It is

ON VARIOUS THEMES

quite a different type of criminal who confronts the modern juror amid the realities of a London Sessions. One is under no temptation to idealise the brute who stabbed his pathetically faithful wife, or to glorify the seaman who broke on a winter night into a workman's dwelling, and stole the clothes and the savings of an old age pensioner. The philosophic anarchist has no practical solution for such cases as these. Tolstoy, had he been called among the T's to a London Grand Jury, would simply have evaded the difficulty by pleading the commandment 'swear not at all,' when the oath was tendered to him. It is easy to run away from actualities, and to confound one's adversary by declaring that in the anarchist millennium the emancipated mother would not give birth to criminal sons. But to us one problem at least presented itself. We have somehow to protect the little straw-coloured wife and the white-haired tenant of the workman's flat. We took our share in protecting them in the well-worn traditional way. It is a way which all experience has shown to be faulty. We know that the brutal husband, if ever again he is sufficiently drunk and sufficiently angry, will not stop

CONFESSIONS OF A JUROR

to reflect on the consequences of drawing his knife. We suspect that the rascally seaman will profit by his experience to perform his next burglary in some slightly more efficient way, or to choose for its scene a port where he is not known to the police. There are two ways of avoiding punishment. The normal man avoids it by prudently refraining from crime, a course to which other instincts move him even more powerfully. The defective man seeks to avoid it by taking care that he shall not be caught. The deterrent effect is a poor argument for a prison system whose chief problem is furnished by the presence of the habitual offender.

There came to the mind of one of the younger B's, as he left the court with his fellows, embarrassed by official thanks, the vision of a Grand Jury which resolved to go on strike. One by one it heard its cases, and one by one it dismissed them all. The cells opened their doors and automatically the released prisoners sorted themselves out, the hopelessly bad to sin again (which in any case they would have done), the accidentally bad to turn over a new leaf, and the innocent to marvel at their fortune.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Before it separated the Grand Jury put its signature to a grand remonstrance. 'Make your prisons,' it wrote, 'places in which the defective mind will encounter a stream of new ideas. Pour into the narrow brain as much as it can receive of cheerful and educative knowledge. Train it to see and hear, and lure it to think of its fellowmen as comrades. Take the stunted body and try, by all the devices which a skilled doctor would use with the children of the rich, to mould and exercise it into health and vigour. Let the indolent and the unlearned, who grew up without a trade at the tail of a carter's van, acquire the pleasure of skill and the delight of productive handicraft. Remodel your prisons on this system, and then we will return you all the true bills which you demand. But, until these things are done, we will not perform even the humblest office of routine in your futile system of punishment.' That dream floated in the juror's mind, until by chance he turned idly to his daily paper, to find there Lord Rosebery's lament on the 'pooling of consciences' and the tyranny of parties. The moral stared legible. Perhaps, after all, the philosophers were right when they talked of

CONFESSIONS OF A JUROR

‘my station and its duties,’ and told us that society is an organism. The groom who daily straps on his horse the bearing-rein, knowing it to be cruel, because his master has bid him, the foreman who takes his share in extracting the last drooping hour of toil from a sweated blouse-maker, the soldier who marches out to slay in a war which his rulers have approved, the juryman who reluctantly performs under oath his share in the round of punishment—are they not all filling quietly, as good men should, their station and its duties? This it is to be a detail in a social organism.

ON FADDISTS

OF all the words in human speech which convey a subtle compliment to the universe, 'faddist' is the chief. The optimist should embroider it upon his flags, the devotee of the older and more complacent religions emblazon it upon his shrine. There are no two syllables in all the gamut of significant sound which declare so audibly that 'all's right with the world.' One seems, when one hears them, to be listening to a chorus of slightly irritable content. The human race rarely meets together, as Beethoven conceived that it should, to sing a hymn to joy. The ear can seldom detect among the rumble of traffic and the whirr of wheels the sublime melody of the Ninth Symphony. But one word is always on the lips of men, and that word is enough. Listen intently when your brother calls you a 'faddist' and you will catch, far off, the sound of some great creature purring like a happy cat before a fire. That

ON FADDISTS

is the musical background of every taunt that is hurled at the disturbing reformer. It rebukes him as the low hum from the myriad occupations of London rebukes the advocate of new things upon Parliament Hill. If the world were indeed a place of disorders and discontents, if the consciousness of things awry did, indeed, vex the general soul, we should be from China to Peru, nothing but a race of faddists. The universe would pass its restless hours like the projectors of Laputa in the constant search of novelty. It would talk of its diseases like the invalids in a Swiss sanatorium. It would welcome the innovator and the reformer as the inmates of a hospital welcome the coming of a new doctor. The more radical and remote the proposal, the more apt would it seem to be to remedy the universal chaos.* The more extravagant the new theory, the better would it seem to fit the hopeless medley of mis-created things. That is not our mood, and never, save perhaps in Paris during the great revolution, has it been the mood of any human society. We are leagued in a vast conspiracy for the preservation of the existing order of things. If we range ourselves in parties, it is with the conscious aim of setting a bound to change.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

There is none of us so advanced that he does not condemn as a fad the proposal that lies beyond his immediate line of march. There is always a point at which we settle down, as it were, in our old-world way-side inn, to drink strong English ale, to give a toast to the King, and to discover that under the old oak rafters in the blaze of a fire of logs things are passing well as they are. We reach that point in our journey when we look down the pannelled vestibule, and hurl the pitying name of 'faddist' at the wayfarer who persists in jogging another mile along the muddy road without. Somewhere in our pilgrimage we are all persuaded that we might go further and fare worse.

The psychology of the 'faddist' remains yet to be written. Who essays it will find that he has undertaken a history of the human mind and a survey of the whole career of thought. We turned, we confess, with great expectations to a volume from the pen of Lady Grove, which bears the alluring title, *On Fads* (Chapman and Hall). The baffled critic is tempted to subject Lady Grove to a Socratic process. She wanders from the teetotaller to the woman suffragist, and from the suffragist to the anti-vaccinator.

ON FADDISTS

But nowhère does she attempt the feat of pursuing the definition of the faddist in the realm of ideas. For our part, we suspect that her knowledge of faddists is something less than complete. She essays to give them good advice. One might as well recommend to them an ungrudging and unvarying conformity. Whatever else is part of the definition of a faddist, this at least belongs to him—that he ignores worldly-wise advice. That is his glory, his province, his excuse for existence in a world of compromise and acquiescence. There is no progress to be made towards the understanding of faddists by cataloguing and analysing their opinions. The fad of to-day is the orthodoxy of to-morrow. The faddist, moreover, exists only in relation to his circle. A Methodist would seem to be a faddist if she were also one of the Smart Set. A Trade Unionist would be a faddist if he were a Primrose Knight and a Tariff Reformer. A Socialist would be, of all faddists, the most outrageous if he happened also to be a naval officer. Any opinion whatever, be it advanced or be it reactionary, may serve to qualify for this distinction, if it does but show some element of the unexpected. The faddist is an excep-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

tion to the general rule that mén do their thinking in flocks and herds.

We would for our part, go further than this in chasing the definition of the faddist. It is a hard saying that any man should be classed as a faddist for a mere crime of opinion. To think at all may be slightly eccentric. But the true faddist is necessarily a man of action and a rebel. He must aspire to propagate the faith that is in him. He must set out to alter the world, and to translate his theory in what is aptly called a 'movement.' The real eccentricity is not in thinking. It is rather in thinking in earnest. The plain man thinks. It is the only condition on which philosophers will allow him to exist. *Cogitat ergo est.* But the mark of a faddist is the belief that his thinking is somehow of importance, that the world is a reasonable system, that his thinking can affect its destinies. Then only does he become a danger to society. The plain man thinks in his leisure hours. He thinks as he dreams, because he must have some occupation for his vacant moments. His mind works, when he is not earning his daily bread, much as the mill furnace smokes on Sunday. It would be difficult and expensive to put it out.

ON FADDISTS

The faddist is eccentric only in so far as he means business with his mental processes. A fad is necessarily a plot against the *status quo*.

But, again, the fear overcomes us of bestowing a rare and honourable distinction with too lavish a hand. A faddist must do more than think, and think with a purpose. He must act as though the truth which he has evolved were in some sense the pivot of the world of truth. It is not enough to be absorbed. It is not enough to be in earnest. A man may consciously adopt what the unthinking describe as a 'fad,' and yet retain within his own interior all the balance and the sanity of the merest Laodicean. He may have about his head a great horizon of eternal things. He may know that his trivial schemings are but an eddy in the whirl of autumn leaves which are the generations of men. He may know, amid his wire-pulling and his organising, his lobbying and his paragraphing to secure the Second Reading of his little Bill, that eternal music lies all the while in the score of a Bradenburg Concerto, and eternal beauty in the curl of Monna Lisa's lips. He may have said to himself that he is but one grain of sand upon the earth, and set himself deliber-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

ately to do the duties of the dust, aware all the while that the stars in their courses move to a larger measure. He may have said that it is a man's work to make an end of vaccination, or to stop the hunting of carted deer. Let him but retain his consciousness of a world beyond his own activities, and he is no faddist. A fad is essentially a lie in the soul. It is the spreading through all the fibres of a man's mind of the conviction that his own little truth is central and fundamental. A duty deliberately chosen from among all the many things that a man may do, chosen because it is the little bit of work in a vast universe that lies ready to his hand, becomes a fad only when he sees in it the key to all the mysteries of time, and the magic formula for all the miseries of fate. Let a man once persuade himself that temperance reform will suffice to make a new society, or that proportional representation is the one thing needful to our politics, and already he is a faddist. He has aspired to change the world, and the world looks on him with its persistent optimism, its unwearying faith in its own essential rightness. Optimism is a condition of self-preservation. When the world laughs at faddists, it sings its own content.

ON GREAT FAMILIES

THERE is in the National Gallery a curious essay in portraiture which inspires, as one gazes at it, a mixture of fascination and fear.

The males of some prosperous Milanese family have been sketched by Borgognone on a single canvas. They stand crowded together in an attitude of conventional devotion, the old, the young, and the middle-aged, some with the apprehensive piety of decrepitude, and some with the insolent sensuality of vigor. The physical type is uncannily persistent. The facial angle hardly differs by a degree. and the same long, straight nose appears, fleshy and aggressive in youth, meagre and cautious in old age. The hair is every shade from yellow to white but always long and straight and straggling. The mouth, shapely and petulant in the young, has still the proportions and the destinies which will end in the straight compressed lines of the older generations. One

ON VARIOUS THEMES

thinks of such a family as a disciplined regiment, wearing always, amid changing fashions of raiment, this abiding uniform of the flesh, marching to the rhythm of some secret measure to the conquest of the scattered individuals, the single sentinels around it. There are minds who love to track in history the records of great families in whom can be traced the persistence of some single trait, physical or mental—the Bourbons, who learned nothing and forgot nothing; the Stuarts, with that obstinacy which mingled so oddly with their more than average intelligence; the Hapsburgs, with that underlip which hung pendulous and sulky for so many centuries above the gaieties of Vienna; the Hohenzollerns, who have commonly contrived to combine a certain dutiful seriousness with every conceivable variety of folly and wisdom. But in all these instances the resemblance is fanciful, a theme which may amuse courtiers and furnish a tag to the weary journalist, but not a line of thought which the serious historian will trouble to follow very closely. There were Bourbons, after all, who tried very hard to learn and forget, particularly those of the younger branch.

ON GREAT FAMILIES

The difficult exception is to be found in the case of the Medici. Theirs was a greatness which survived three centuries, and invaded every Power in Christendom. They mingled their blood with Stuarts, Bourbons, and Hapsburgs. An Empress of Austria died contemplating a family tree which traced her origin from Florentine bankers. The history of the Renaissance would be an unintelligible page without them. The end of the Byzantine Empire cannot be understood without reference to that Œcumenical Council which Cosimo Pater Patriae transferred to Florence. Ask why it was that Luther dragged half of Germany into schism, and the answer is that the first of the Medici Popes was absorbed in a debauch of culture. Ask why it was that England gained a national church under Henry VIII, and again the answer is that the second of the Medici Popes adjusted the great network of his European policy to further his ends in the mother-city on the Arno, played with Francis, Charles, and Henry, as though they were merely pawns in a Florentine intrigue, and cared little that England should be lost to the Church he ruled, if only his bastard son might be raised to the Dukedom.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Seek the reasons for the destruction of Protestantism in France, and again it is the face of a Medici, the Queen-Regent Margaret, which smiles above the horrors of St Bartholomew. In all this greatness, this baseness and this blindness, the Medici were their own stewards and advisers. There is no Richelieu, no Strafford, no 'grey Eminence' in their story. They paid in immediate disaster for their occasional inefficiency. They reaped for themselves the whole glory of their more usual competence.

Should we see them, these perennial Medici, a phalanx of uniformed soldiers, opening the world as their oyster, each with the same smile of resolute assurance, if we could find them together on a canvas by Borgognone? An elaborate family history has at last been attempted,* written, on the whole, from the standpoint of eulogy. But, with all its wealth of portraits, with all the aid of photographed busts and reproductions from Botticelli and Bronzino, the impression is not one of unity. Colonel Young is, indeed, impressed, perhaps a little uncritically, with the hereditary talent of this

* *The Medici*. By Colonel G. F. Young, C.B. 2 vols. Murray.

ON GREAT FAMILIES

powerful family. He traces their history, one by one, from the obscure greatness of their first informal despotism in 1400 down to their inglorious decay in the eighteenth century. He sets them in the rich frame of contemporary European politics, and reinforces their glory by the glitter of all the architects, the painters, the scholars, and the poets whom they patronised. If his two fat volumes have too often the manner of a compilation, they are informed, none the less, by the steady purpose of tracing what was uniform, and throwing into relief what was splendid, in the annals of these bourgeois who got more Kings than Banquo. But the one thing which they do not convey is any sense of personal identity through the successive generations of great Medici. It is possible, with the aid of Bronzino's retrospective and perhaps idealised portraits, to trace a certain physical likeness between Giovanni di Bicci, the first of the Medici who in any sense ruled Florence, Cosimo Pater Patriae, his son, and Lorenzo the Magnificent, his great-grandson. At least they belong to the same racial type. It is not at all an aristocratic type. It suggests, indeed, powers of calculation, self-restraint,

ON VARIOUS THEMES

secrecy, and steadiness, but it is the head of a man of affairs, a head one would expect to encounter in a banker or a merchant, but not in a soldier, a country gentleman, or an 'intellectual.' The busts of the grandson, Piero il Gottoso, display bigger features and a larger head, suggest (despite his physical weakness) a muscular rather than a nervous organisation, and convey a sense of power and command. In Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano, on the other hand, we reach, for the first time, a Medici, who shows in every feature, and even in the pose of the head, a gay, beautiful, sensitive personality, which might, if it had degenerated, have become insolent and self-indulgent, but could never have been crafty or cold. The two Popes were as distinct from each other, and from other notable Medici, as well could be ; while the two disastrous heads of the elder branch, Pietro the Unfortunate, whose portrait by Botticelli has all the air of triumphant likeness, and Alessandro the Moor, the bastard son of Clement VII, were manifestly their mother's sons. Indeed, it was just so long as the Medici continued to marry into other Florentine families which had the same simplicity of manners, with the same high

ON GREAT FAMILIES

culture, the same neighbourly geniality, and that Republican modesty which Tacitus, in a parallel case, used to call the *civile ingenium*, that they retained at once their genius and the confidence of their fellow-citizens. Their moral decline, their misfortunes, and the ruin of the old Florence, dated from the marriage of Lorenzo the Magnificent to a Roman aristocrat. They were evidently not a male stock which could transmit itself unmixed from generation to generation. The Medici inheritance was, indeed, rather a tradition than the blood of genius. Their conscious adherence to citizen manners, their preference for the reality rather than the name of power, their taste in art, their habit of public munificence, their calculated generosity to their enemies—these things were probably rather a strategy thought out in common in the banking house, a product of a certain environment, an effect of careful instruction, than the expression of a temperament which descended from father to son with the *palle* and the florins. There is only one other family which we can recall that showed a like uniformity of talent through so many generations. The Bachs were musical through eight genera-

ON VARIOUS THEMES

tions, and professional musicians through six. They attained supreme genius in one member, distinction of the second order in three or four, competent ability in all. They had a habit of marrying their cousins, but it was their constant family meetings and the practice that the father and elder brothers should undertake the teaching of the younger Bachs which made the family tradition. They were, in fact, a school as well as a family. Physical heredity counts for incomparably less in the making of great families than the permanence of a view of life or a style in art handed down with deliberate intention from one generation to another.

When history has stripped itself of such semi-magical conceptions as heredity, and ceased to take the notion of transmitted capacity on trust, it will, we think, examine the annals of the Medici with a shrewder curiosity about their finances. Colonel Young has devoted some two pages in these two volumes to the Medici Bank. A realist historian would have taken the Bank as his starting point. It was their credit rather than their talent which made them indispensable to the Republic. They ruled

ON GREAT FAMILIES

Florence without troops or titles, because Florence was their debtor. It was with loans that they bought the Sforza connection and the privilege of being the Papal bankers. One is curious to know how far their partisans in Florence were also their clients, and what part their international banking played in their brilliant diplomacy. Florence tried to drive Cosimo Pater Patriae into exile, only to find after a year's experience that she could not conduct her wars without his loans. Nor could they even in exile become insignificant; they still controlled a world-wide banking system. Ask, moreover, why they seized so much power and no more, and again the answer probably is that they snatched power enough to protect their property. 'It fares ill in Florence,' as the great Lorenzo put it, when he ascended his invisible throne, a plain Republican, 'with anyone who possesses wealth without any control in the Government.' The Medici seized power to protect their bank; they were allowed to keep it because Florence needed their credit. The system they inaugurated, from Giovanni di Bicci in 1400 down to Cosimo II, who in 1609 abandoned the Bank, because it was glory enough that

ON VARIOUS THEMES

scions of the Medici sat on four European thrones, was in short a plutocracy centred in a single head. If the Bachs were a school, the Medici were a firm. Ask what inscrutable force of genius it was which descended from generation to generation, and shone among the sinister Grand Dukes of the younger no less than among the genial citizens of the elder branch, and the answer of the realist is in two words—the Medici millions. They rose to the head of the Florentine State primarily because the bad debts owed by our own Edward III to the other Florentine bankers crippled their rivals at the critical moment. They valued their power for the same reason which leads Lord Rothschild to uphold the veto of the Peers. As for their European position, they achieved it by the simple expedient of buying a Pope. Their history, in short, is the epic of property, a pæan to the power of wealth. It was ~~not~~ genius, it was not cunning, which made the Medici great. They were great because they knew how to spend their income without squandering their capital; because their Bank was as cosmopolitan as the Church; because they understood the use, and, above all, the abuse

ON GREAT FAMILIES

of money. The single point in which they did show genius was that they had the skill to fill their glorious pawnshop with such a flutter of Nativity angels and such a litter of Greek manuscripts that to this day historians can hardly see the ledger.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH MORALISTS

MODERN civilisation has been fatal to the wicked man. The types whom our ancestors would have classed under the splendid and comprehensive name no doubt survive. A Hebrew Psalmist would recognise them as certainly as a Zulu medicine-man will smell out witches, and he would be appalled to discover that modern culture, which multiplies his own hymns by machinery in a thousand languages, has also given to the wicked a score of new ways of flourishing like a green bay tree. A Bunyan or a Wesley would see the world to-day in plain black and white, much as we see it Kaffir or European when we land at Capetown. But the modern man has lost these bold and simple classifications. The villain has vanished from our fiction, and I fancied until the other day that the wicked man no longer haunted the pulpit. We talk of

A REMONSTRANCE WITH MORALISTS

deficient sympathies, or atrophied imaginations; we consider the unjust and the predatory man as an imperfectly 'socialised' individual, and try to regard him, with what tolerance we can, as the survival of an obsolete phase of moral evolution.

But I met the wicked man the other day, vital and simple, and it was, of course, in a church. The preacher was one of the ablest and the noblest of modern teachers. He is, perhaps, the one man in England to-day, who speaks as one of the prophets, and draws the sweetness, the simplicity, and the dignity of his utterance from a well of direct inspiration. But one passage in his sermon puzzled and surprised me. He seemed to assume that the wealthy man, who has thriven by unjust and unscrupulous means, is consciously 'wicked.' He went on, moreover, to assume that he is also unhappy—'a miserable prisoner in a golden cage.' The instance which he selected showed that he had in mind the triumphant person of indifferent ethics, who becomes a knight or a peer in the evening of his days.

From the earliest times the prosperity of the wicked man has vexed moralists.

ON VARIOUS THEMES

The line which they inclined to take at first was simple and trenchant. They denied that lifelong prosperity was ever the portion of the wicked man (or at all events of his children), and maintained with a splendid obstinacy that the virtuous man, though he may have his trials, does at least end prosperously. Facts, no doubt, were always against them; but facts alone are rarely fatal to any social theory which has its obvious conveniences for a governing class. There are county magistrates to-day who stoutly refuse to admit that any destitute man can be virtuous or any prosperous man a knave. But the rest of us know to our cost that the righteous man does occasionally beg his bread—the fact is, indeed, so notorious that the Charity Organisation Society has been founded to deal with his case. It was not fact, however, but a rival theory which destroyed this particular assumption of the moralist. The old Hebrew idealisation of wealth and fatness gave way before a lean and ascetic virtue. If Job had been a Catholic instead of a Semitic saint, he would have ended his days as a celibate and childless mendicant friar, and not as a wealthy patriarch surrounded by flocks and children.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH MORALISTS

But the old prejudice survived in a new form. Instead of saying that the good man is prosperous, the moralists now took refuge in declaring that he alone is happy. Some secret misery, some corrosion of remorse must sour the triumph of the wicked. That has been the guiding thought of most of our classical literature, and all our pulpit oratory. It is the moral sanction behind all 'happy endings.' It stands enshrined in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, as the earlier notion is embodied in the Book of Job.

The moralist is usually a sympathetic person, and the mistake which he commits is to project his own sensitive personality into the coarser carcase of the 'wicked man.' If he were to find himself in the possession of ill-gotten gains, he would undoubtedly be unhappy — 'a miserable prisoner in a golden cage.' If Wilberforce had suddenly dropped his agitation and bought a slave plantation in the West Indies, he would have ended his days in gloom and melancholy. But the planters whom he denounced were average sensual men, who found a savour in their port, which was in no way impaired because it had been bought with the blood of slaves. I should doubt if the

ON VARIOUS THEMES

late Sovereign of the Congo Free State was more unhappy than the secretary of the Congo Reform Association, and indeed I do not see how a Congo reformer, forced to think day and night of that hideous wickedness, can enjoy an hour of happiness.

I once knew a journalist—now dead—of the type whom the preacher denounced. Though an Englishman by birth, he had written for pay anti-British articles in Chicago, during the early stages of the Boer war; anti-Boer articles in Toronto during its later phases, Tariff Reform articles in London when the fiscal campaign began, and Free Trade articles in Scotland after the General Election. In the intervals of this stirring career, he had been a successful 'religious editor,' and a brilliant 'police-court investigator.' He was a genial and kindly person, popular, jovial, and entirely free from remorse. A stern moralist would denounce him as an unscrupulous mercenary. The simple fact was, of course, that he really had no interest whatever in politics, and no real understanding of them. He was thoroughly happy. He regarded himself as a smart, up-to-date, Americanised business-

A REMONSTRANCE WITH MORALISTS

man, the sort of man to make a great Empire or a thriving Republic—they were all one to him. A wicked man he was not. His misfortune was that he did not believe that ideas really play a part in life. I knew another man whose conduct towards women had been throughout a long life habitually blackguardly. Yet he had stern principles in politics for which he had suffered in income and position. He was, in all his dealings with his own sex, generous, loyal, and honourable. But the fundamental fact in his nature was a sort of physical antagonism to women, which was none the less consistent with violent animal passions. He hated all the refinements and tastes of life which he associated with women, and I shall never forget his anger on his death-bed, when I brought him a bunch of spring flowers. He was what the French call a 'mangeur de femmes,' for the same reason that some men are slave-owners, and others live by sensational journalism. His imagination had somewhere a blind spot. There was in his character no place for any sympathy, for any disinterested love of women. That lack was with him to the end. He felt no remorse; he was on the

ON VARIOUS THEMES

whole happy. An innocent man can be made more unhappy by a walk at midnight among the wreckage of womanhood that fills the streets of Central London, than was this old sinner by the recollection of his personal wrong-doing. Indeed, it might be urged with more reason that only the wicked man can be happy, for he alone ignores his own complicity in the misery and oppression around him.

Moralists, who have already abandoned the theory that virtue means prosperity, will in time also discard the view that wickedness is misery. A musician, stepping out from one of Sir Henry Wood's concerts, may shudder as he catches the chorus of a music-hall song outside a public-house. But he will not deny that the rude singers are happy. What is true of taste is true also of conduct. The man whose whole joy lies in externals and in physical well-being can be happy with motor-cars and champagne, even if there lies a shady speculation or an insanitary factory behind them. The just man, it is true, feels the reckless joy of his courage when he stands up, '*integer vitae scelerisque purus*,' before kings and millionaires. That, however, is his own secret.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH MORALISTS

The millionaire is content with champagne. And 'pushpin' as Bentham put it, is from the standpoint of mere happiness 'as good as poetry, provided the pleasure be as great.'

ON CYCLING IN LONDON

‘THERE is a courage proper to dragoons,’ said the brave old Bishop in Hugo’s *Misérables*, ‘there is also a courage proper to priests.’ The phrase has often come into my mind as I have watched the newspaper cyclist gliding over some smooth stretch of sticky asphalt pavement in Holborn or the City. He is neither dragoon nor priest. But he, too, has a courage all his own. He rides a crazy machine, he balances a great burden of ‘extra-specials’ on his back which must impose upon each muscle in his body its delicate problem of adjustment, he knows that any sudden application of his brake would send him skidding over the slime, and yet he glides, rapid, fearless, and at ease in front of slow drays, under the noses of hurrying hansom horses, in the smoke of a fuming motor-’bus, between hesitating foot-passengers, whose timidities and awkwardnesses are perhaps the hardest factor in his

ON CYCLING IN LONDON

intricate calculations. For it is not only a feat of nerve and muscle which he performs. Every yard presents its nice problem in mathematics. He must assess the speed of every hastening vehicle, strike the equation of every loitering pedestrian, and complete the curve described by every swerving mass. A debater threading his way through the prejudices of a mixed audience performs a less anxious feat.

It is a triumph of skill, but it is also an achievement of the imagination.

It is a finer and rarer bravery than 'the courage of the dragoon.' I have known a soldier who had commanded irregulars in South Africa, won distinction by his coolness and his skill, and proved his readiness to rush unbidden into mortal danger, who yet shrank from a challenge to ride his bicycle from Charing Cross to the Mansion House. The problem for the soldier under fire is really to still his intelligence, to deaden his imagination, and to assume, if not exactly an attitude of passivity, at least an attitude of activity which has no direct relation to his danger. The process of becoming accustomed to the whistling of bullets is at best a mere waiting upon habit. There is first the

ON VARIOUS THEMES

stage of deadly and sickening fear, in which the soldier's whole imagination is concentrated on each threatening noise. It is as though he had nerves in every region of the atmosphere, nerves which vibrate in front where the enemy lies, a distant and scarcely visible mass, nerves which feel the impact of spent bullets in the ground at his feet, nerves which register the passage of bullets to right and to left, nerves which tingle in the flesh of the comrade who falls at his side. As the mere physical horror passes, he begins to think about it all, to calculate curves, to judge of marksmanship.

That stage gives way to a mere indifference, and the phase called courage is reached when he stands at the last four-square, ceases to make his shoulders narrower than Providence intended, and ignores the messages of death and danger that still pass hurrying about him. It is a process towards stupefaction. It is not an intelligent adjustment. He merely shuts off certain suggestions, turns a deaf ear to certain noises, behaves as though half the stimuli which crowd upon the senses were meaningless and irrelevant. It is not exactly an effort of will, still less is it a moral stiffen-

ON CYCLING IN LONDON

ing. It is simply the same mechanical concentration which one affects when one writes amid the noise of a printing press, or talks amid the playing of a barrel-organ. The soldier may continue to aim with care and forethought; he may even think out problems in strategy. But these activities are not the immediate response of a threatened organism to an invading danger. They are not the intelligent activities of a fencer who parries a thrust, and must gauge his danger before he secures his safety.

The courage of the city cyclist is in short rather the courage of the swordsman than the courage of the modern rifleman. He must not ignore his danger. Rather his whole energy must be centred on realising it. His safety lies not in stupefaction, but in stimulation. To each new combination of traffic he must oppose some modification of his own course. His courage is the courage of intelligence and alertness, and not of brutality or fatalism.

For my part, I often wonder why the doctors do not prescribe cycling in the City as a cure for worry and neurasthenia.

The peasants in Tourgenieff's *Virgin*

ON VARIOUS THEMES

Soil used a pretty word which comes to me in this connection. They said that the hero and heroine who had donned peasant's dress, left learning and luxury behind, and gone down 'to the people' had 'simplified themselves.' There is nothing like a cycle ride in a crowded London street for 'simplifying' a mind that has knotted itself into tangles. You must leave behind your quiddities and your distinctions, your scruples and your principles, your anxious forebodings for humanity and your care for your own career, if you mean to cycle safely from Charing Cross to Waterloo Bridge. Your mind becomes an intelligent wheel, a calculating tyre. You are a mere thing, like the wood pavement and the neighbouring dray. You lose even the dignity of your two legs and the affectations of your human posture. Once or twice, perhaps, you attempt to go wool-gathering. 'What shall we do with the House of Lords?' say you, sitting straight on your seat, calling into play your free-wheel, and gliding onward with a noble expression on your countenance. Suddenly you realise that you are ducking under the nose of a horse and emerging at the edge of a stationary dust-cart. Somehow the House

ON CYCLING IN LONDON

of Lords ceases to matter, and you 'simplify' yourself once more.

As you discard your interests, jettison your principles, and smooth out the tangle of your cares, a great peace steals over your soul. You bend every thought to the task of avoiding this hansom and that street-lamp. The problem is, after all, not too much for the human mind. It may be solved. It is strictly finite. It brings you face to face with no sphinx-like antinomy, no fundamental contradiction. It is enough to occupy you—at your peril do not attempt more. But success is possible, and every yard is a triumph. You become, if not exactly 'as a little child,' at least like a healthy stable-boy. Your wrinkles vanish, your cheeks grow ruddy, your intellect elementary.

De Quincey chuckled to himself as he described the great S. T. C., 'though something stout,' posting off to see a fire. I like to picture to myself G. K. C. coasting down Ludgate-hill among a caravan of 'buses. Would he find a paradox to shout to the policeman on the refuge, do you think? I am bold enough to doubt if even Mr Shaw would be witty or Henry James

ON VARIOUS THEMES

obscure amid the press of Fleet Street at noon.

Our literature will never be healthy-minded until our writers learn to spend an hour of every day on their bicycles in the Strand.

THE MODERN PEEP-SHOW

SOMEWHERE in the gracious prolixity of *Wahrheit und Dichtung* Goethe describes, with much affectionate detail, how the Boy played with his sister at the game of puppets. The reminiscence takes its place superbly and greatly amid so much else which was of interest to the grandest egoist that the earth has yet had the honour to bear. Was there indeed, any episode in his career that was not worth recording, save, indeed, the fact that he ran away at Valmy? Its significance, if we remember rightly, lay in this, that even at that tender age the author of *Egmont* and *Faust* displayed his genius for the theatre. But who does not remember the glories of these early sports? Peep-show or puppet-show belong to the greatest memories of the nursery. We never wholly outlive their glamour, we never quite overcome the furtive and regretful instinct that would carry us

ON VARIOUS THEMES

back to them again. Our own reminiscence is of a modest yet precious mechanism. It was a primitive peep-show, a thing constructed by an ingenious but absent-minded uncle whose performance was never quite so magnificent as his promises. It was nothing but a band-box with a slit in the side, a paste-board wheel within that you turned from below, and an arrangement of blinkers set at due distance which gave to its use a suggestion of mystery and solemnity. It had only one scene—the Lord Mayor's show, a gaudy painted scroll whose grandeurs day after day we caused to circle past the slit. We might as well have spread the scroll before us and gloated at our leisure over the gilded carriages and the knights in armour. But the peep-show gave us the illusion of life and the sense of power. The painted figures stood erect and they visibly moved before us. One after the other, in ordered sequence, they passed across that magic slit, and to see them between blinkers gave us we knew not what sense of privilege and secrecy. But the best of all was the sense of power that came to the child with the wheel. He could say to the Lord Mayor 'Come,' and he came, and play Centurion to the knights.

THE MODERN PEEP-SHOW

A word of command and the great magnates of the City moved at a snail's pace. A caprice and a twist of the thumb, and they raced past with a breathless and vertiginous celerity. We had our knights and aldermen at our beck and call. We enjoyed ourselves as Adam and Eve did in the Dutch paintings at the Hague when they marshalled the beasts before them and called them by their names. To run a peep-show is in some sense to perform an act of creation, to give impulse and life, to bring an ordered procession out of chaos.

It has been left to our time to discover all the latent potentialities of the peep-show. There was tragedy on a harvest-wain before the Greeks dug their theatre and built a scene. There were peep-shows at village-fairs before modern mechanism had evolved the present marvels of this form of art. But it has been reserved for the progress of the past two or three years to raise this entertainment to the level of the most popular of contemporary amusements. 'Cinema' is the modern name. It is very well to banish compulsory Greek from Oxford, but we like to be classical in Leicester Square. 'Electric Theatre' is no less Greek, and almost as

ON VARIOUS THEMES

mysterious, while it conveys even to the least scholarly mind the suggestion of some performance of a dazzling rapidity and modernity. These places dot the Strand as thick as public-houses. They jostle the music-halls for space in the inner City of Pleasure. They invade the suburbs. They clamber up to Hampstead Heath. What is the properest day to see a cinematograph? They are open every day and all the day. They know no pause. The relentless pageant of their glories unrolls itself before mid-day, and ceases only when the file of carriages has melted from before the Opera. The old peep-show boasted a certain individuality and variety. The modern peep-show has discovered the fundamental fact of the identity of human tastes. What the public wants is of all problems the simplest. It wants on the whole the same thing, and yet again more of the same thing. The peep-show that pleases Paris will be popular in New York or Berlin, and what the public throngs to see at Charing Cross will allure it at Brixton or Mile-End. Two or three firms study its tastes from their conning-towers, and manufacture its pleasures wholesale. It is a stupendous thought that at the

THE MODERN PEEP-SHOW

same day, and the same hour, the same films are turning in the same ritual order in ten thousand electric theatres, from Chicago to Berlin—and for all we know, from Moscow to San Francisco. Prophets have dreamed of a universal religion, and philosophers of a universal language. But here at last is the talisman that confounds Babel. The same laugh will run by parcel-post over the inhabited globe, and the same naïve sentiment link unconsciously the hearts of nations whom politics sever in vain. To the habitués of these peep-shows no land can be foreign. Emigration has lost its pathos, and of the wanderers to distant climes it will be said ‘*Coelum non cinema mutant.*’ Armageddon might come to confound our intercourse, but still the same films would go out to delight hostile peoples, and in the intervals of warfare the embattled armies would simultaneously indulge in the same harmless recreation. The entertainment is as yet only in its infancy. Commerce alone has discovered it, and the genius of gain hugs its secret that human nature is unfathomably simple, and that all the world is kin. But there will come a great architect of opinion, who will teach the world to assimilate a

single thought by the agency of the electric theatre. Napoleon used to send his orders to his caricaturists. Cecil Rhodes manipulated the telegraph. The conqueror of to-morrow will rule the nations through the cinematograph.

What is it that they flock to see, day after day, in patient relays that keep the turnstiles for ever moving and set the attendants their endless task of patiently filling the rarely vacant seats in the darkness of the busy room? For what do they desert the theatres and ignore the music-halls? Words are no vehicle to convey the artlessness of the modern peep-show. It is thought without language. It is life as the cat may see it, blinking, with one eye closed, upon her point of vantage. Language, be it never so simple, is always a generalisation. To use words is necessarily to think. But here you are passive and vacant. The Japanese on the seat beside you is at no loss to understand, and the Frenchman who cannot master English enough to ask for his ticket will miss nothing of the meaning of the dumb-show. There is physical humour, briefer than a pantomime, easier than a farce. Baffled policemen chase a sympathetic

THE MODERN PEEP-SHOW

delinquent in and out of a window, and in and out again. A workman called in to repair a leaking gas pipe knocks over the chair on which he attempts to stand, and in every room of the house he repeats the same artless manoeuvre. There is not even a pun to weary the brain, nor a rhyme to engage the ear, nor an allusion to plague the memory. There are novels in brief—a species of the Bret Harte tale about two dare-devils in the Far West who love the same girl, and fight with Indians. There are no descriptive passages to weary the attention. The imagination is not fatigued to realise the bold features of the men, to conceive their pistols and their knives and their dashing cow-boy breeches, or to draw from memory a vague picture of the soft charms and coquettish movements of the girl. You see all these things without effort. What are words after all? They are all imperatives, so many commands to the brain, so many demands on the labouring conception. The reader, even of a boy's penny dreadful, must needs be a lesser Scott, a Dumas who requires only a hint to weave for himself his own romances. The electric theatre has made all the poor makeshift of

ON VARIOUS THEMES

words an obsolete and archaic device. It does your imagining for you. It saves you the labour of conception. 'There on the rocky plateau, as the glorious sun of California cast its last rays upon the mountains, the bold cowboy grappled with the naked limbs of the Indian, faced him with a defiance as murderous as his own, and plunged his own dagger into the recreant heart of the aborigine.' Mere literature! What does it mean to the habitu   of the electric theatre? Can he imagine for himself the rocky plateau or the Californian sun, or the naked aborigine, or the murderous glance? It would fatigue him to attempt it, it would baffle him to achieve it. He has no seething alembic in his simple brain. His imagination is not peopled with puppets which will dance when words pull the strings. He is the plain man for whom seeing is believing. The electric theatre is his library. While you sit bored and starving, crying out for words and ideas, he for the first time is tasting the delights that you have drawn since childhood from your books. There comes a fairy-tale upon the screen. You sigh for the verbal magic of Hans Andersen. But he for the first time is passing through

THE MODERN PEEP-SHOW

the ivory gates whose hinges for you are cunning words.

We have most of us tried to imagine what the brain of the savage is really like inside. That is the real exploration, the only travel worth the labour. Captain Cook, who discovered the islands of the sea, was a poor adventurer in comparison with Gauguin, who has shown us with what eyes the men of Tahiti look out and see the world. But the literate man of books has more in common with the savage who delights in ballads, than with the plain man who frequents the electric theatre. The half-naked fellah, who listens with passionate interest to the rhapsodist's recitations in the market-place of Cairo, has an imagination which takes fire from words. The electric mind belongs to a yet lower order of civilisation, to the 'dull and speechless tribes.' It has survived the age of ignorance, and resisted the age of education. It is the majority. It is the normal mind. Its time has come at last. Words, as Bob Acres would put it, have had their day. The novelist of the future will sketch a series of scenes for the cinematograph artist. The Lord Acton of to-morrow will draft an

ON VARIOUS THEMES

historic tableau. And philosophy — philosophy must be content to offer a living picture of Heracleitus wagging an eloquent finger to represent the flux, while it inscribes above the restless curtain its comprehensive 'panta rhei.'

V

EASTERN SKETCHES

OSMAN DIGNA †

TEN years have passed since Mahdism came to its end. Its death was greater than its life. Who has forgotten even now the story of its euthanasia? Defeated, abandoned, and pursued, the Khalifa, with his Emirs round him, turned to confront the hunters, knelt on their praying-mats in the desert, and waited, praising the greatness of God, their faces to Mecca and the enemy, while the bullets mowed them down.

I saw the scene rehearsed the other day by one who had survived the act of faith. An old man now, with white beard sharply outlined against an almost ebony skin, his fine features and lithe, tall form told of his Arab descent. The fragment of an arm hung at his side, to remind him of that

† This sketch, which appeared in the *Nation*, (18th April 1908,) differs from the other Eastern sketches in this volume in being a literal record of a visit to an historical character. Osman Digna is still in prison at Damietta. His companions were released shortly after the publication of this article.

EASTERN SKETCHES

tremendous moment. He told his tale with the smile of a child, and the brevity of a soldier. 'There were the English, and here were we, with the Khalifa in our midst. We got down from our camels. He gave the word and led our prayers'—and here the old man fell on his knees and prostrated himself before Allah and the shower of lead which his old ears still heard around him. 'They were all killed, and I was wounded.'

'And why,' I asked, 'did you do it?'

'It was the hour of prayer.'

The answer, I think, was finer than the deed. It robbed it of the colour of the theatre in which history has painted it. Those Arab chieftains were not posing before heaven and the enemy. They had no thought of making a superb end. The hour of prayer had come, and they knelt as habit and ritual prescribed. They had knelt before in rain-storms and dust-storms. They knelt as simply amid the infidel bullets.

It was in a prison that I heard the tale. A sentry stood at the door with fixed bayonet, and the gaoler listened at my side with a tolerant smile. The British public consigned the Khalifa and his Emirs to the temple of fame. The Egyptian War Office

buried the survivors in the prison of Damietta. Gaunt and forbidding, it stands beside a hospital and a court-house in a bleak enclosure beside the Nile. There is in all Egypt no damper or colder place than this decaying sea-port among the swamps. One prisoner had died—‘of the damp,’ his brother said. Another, who used to sit all day beside a brazier, has been transferred to a prison in the South. Seven remain, counting the years of their exile, and hoping faintly for release.

One by one I visited their rooms. Each room housed a family which boasts its princely rank. The stone floor was neatly sanded, the bare walls irreproachably white-washed. Each room had its little truckle beds, and its platform on which the prisoner’s wife sat cross-legged with her babies round her. Every morning the children of captivity sally out to the freedom of school, and their parents watch behind the bayonet of the sentinel for their return. A paternal Government is teaching scientific agriculture to the boys, and some have already received posts in the Soudan. The parents count the uneventful years. The routine of the prison is rarely broken. Sometimes, they

EASTERN SKETCHES

told me, they are allowed to sun themselves in the doorway. From three in the afternoon till sundown they may walk in the courtyard. Occasionally, at Bairam, a relative is allowed by special permission of the War Office to visit their prison. They do not smoke; they play no games, rigid Puritans that they are. Reading is not for them in the category of pleasures. I asked if they had any pastimes. They answered gravely and without affectation, 'We say our prayers.'

Who are they, these untried prisoners, who are expiating an indefinite sentence, soldiers to whom no parole has been offered? Six belong to the Baggara tribe; two are cousins of the Khalifa; one is the son of his designated successor. Two are now old men, beyond the age when men dream of raids and revolts. Four were mere lads when the prison doors closed upon them. They have ripened and married and bred children in captivity. One of the four was a boy of twelve when first he was captured; the other three ranged from fifteen to twenty. They are prisoners, not for any part which they can have played in the bloody past, but simply because they reckon their descent

OSMAN DIGNA

from the Mahdi's Emirs. The memory of the angry past is already faint in their minds, and no spiritual exaltation sustains them. They stood together in the corridor as I took leave of them, a file of broken and submissive men. In a sort of chorus they solemnly renounced all faith in the Mahdi. Latterly, indeed, they told me, even in the days of the Khalifa, they had ceased to believe that he was a Prophet. They had followed the Khalifa simply as kinsmen and loyal clansmen. For the rest, as they put it, 'Has not the Soudan become even as Egypt, and is not the English Government our father?' Recollecting a certain answer to a question in the House of Commons, I inquired if they did not dread the vengeance of their private enemies, for that, I believe, is now the pretext of their imprisonment. No, they answered; their relatives in the Soudan are safe; why should they fear?

There was yet a seventh prisoner, the most famous of them all—Osman Digna. We paused at his door, and the gaoler, peering cautiously through the peep-hole, bade us wait, for the old man was at prayer. He rose at length—a tall, gaunt figure, stately in his white robe and simple turban.

EASTERN SKETCHES

Courteous, yet taciturn, he answered my questions curtly and with indifferent negatives. He was well and vigorous. He complained of nothing. He asked for nothing, not even liberty. I began to despair of gaining his confidence. Neither wife nor child shared his captivity. A single book, carefully folded in a threadbare linen cover, gave the only clue to his occupations. 'He eats,' whispered the gaoler, 'only once a day, and does not mix with the other prisoners.' He was talking now more rapidly to my interpreter, and his hoarse, guttural voice betrayed a note of excitement. A series of unintelligible questions reached me, one after the other. 'What Government was it which held him prisoner?' 'What is the place you call a prison?' 'He has something to say,' whispered the interpreter; 'let him talk.'

'In the years before the Mahdi arose,' the hoarse, eager voice was saying, 'the world walked in ignorance and darkness. It had forgotten God, and nowhere was the Law obeyed. The Book was forgotten, and even the Sultan ruled by man-made laws. Are not the Laws by which men should walk set forth in the Koran? Yet the

Sultan had made laws of his own invention for the government of the earth. Then God spoke to the Mahdi, and he arose, the Prophet whose coming is foretold in the Book. The Mahdi summoned the Sultan to obedience, saying, "Arise, and repent, and rule by the Law of the Book." If the Sultan had obeyed, the Mahdi would have retired, and spent the rest of his life in prayer. But the Sultan would not hear, neither would the Egyptians transmit the message.

'Now, when God saw the disobedience of the Sultan, and that he ruled by man-made laws, and would not hearken to the voice of the Mahdi, His Prophet, he sent a scourge to punish the Turks and the Egyptians. That scourge was the English. They have taken Egypt. It is the Lord's judgment on Sultan Abdul Hamid.'

Here the old man paused. Rising to his full height, he spoke again, his voice clear and authoritative at last. 'Know, too,' he went on, 'that I also am a Prophet, the interpreter of God, even as you are the interpreter of this Englishman.' He clutched his throat. 'The voice is mine, but the words I speak are the words which God has given

EASTERN SKETCHES

me. To me, Osman Digna, is given a message. I am a Prophet, even as Mahomet was a Prophet. My commission from God came to me from the hands of the Mahdi. I went to him at Kordofan, where he was with the Khalifa, when I heard that the English were coming from India, and the Mahdi made me his equal. He gave me a letter, and sealed it with his seal, and in the letter was written, "Let him who obeys us, obey you, and let him who honours us, honour you also." Thus he did that the prophecy might be fulfilled, and the Book obeyed. For it is written, "We sent unto them two apostles, but they charged them with imposture. Wherefore we strengthened them with a third." (Koran, Sura 36.) I am that third.

'Then it was that the Mahdi gave me this Book,' (he snatched the old linen-covered Koran from his bed), 'and bade me keep it, and rule by it, and restore its Law to the earth.'

'I am a prisoner. But I hold the Book. To whom shall I transmit the Book which is the very Law of God?' (He held it in his sinuous brown fingers, as Moses might have held the tablets when he came down

from Sinai—a man of the same race, living in the same communion with God, untroubled by the march of the centuries and the decay of faith.) ‘To whom shall I transmit it? To the Sultan? To the Khedive? To the King of the English? Nay, but God has taken care of His Book. Am I not the prisoner of the English? Is not the Book in their care and charge?’

‘Hear, then, my message. God has chosen out the English, for he saw that they are the strongest. He has ordered the world to walk after the ordinances of His Book. He has placed His Book and His Prophet in the keeping of the English. The Lord has ordered the English to spread Islam, and to destroy its foes. The English are now the prophets of Islam. Hear the voice of God. It is written in the Book. The Lord chose out Adam and Abraham. I say unto you, “The Lord has chosen the English.” Are they not the first in war? Have they not captured the Book and imprisoned its Prophet? Let the Egyptians be humble before them’—he glowered at his gaoler—‘they are Moslems only by the permission of the English. So is my mission ended. I have waited for this day.

EASTERN SKETCHES

I have transmitted my message by your hand to the English people. I am happy, for my message is spoken.'

The old man was silent at last. The centuries had rolled backwards in his white-washed cell. I had seen Sinai and Mecca, and talked with a patriarch who was young with Moses, and contemporary with Mahomet. He had wrestled with facts and destiny, and woven from it a philosophy of history, as naïve and as cogent as Daniel's. 'In the beginning was the word.' 'In the beginning was the fact.' Osman Digna is of Faust's opinion. The English are his fact. He has found a place for us in his scheme of things.

We came rapidly down from Sinai. The gaoler was looking impatiently at his watch. The six dervishes were waiting anxiously at the door. They assured me that they regarded the pretensions of the Prophet with abhorrence. They believed, indeed, that he was mad. For two years he had been imprisoned in solitude. Then they were allowed to see him; but for twenty months he lay on his bed and spoke to no one. Then he began to talk of his message; the Government must not blame them.

OSMAN DIGNA

Nine years of prison have done their work. The little men have grown servile. The great man is mad.

‘I fought against him in the Soudan,’ said the old captain, his gaoler, as we left the prison. ‘He was a wonderful soldier—just like De Wet. Is De Wet also in prison?’

‘No, Captain. De Wet is not in prison. De Wet is a Minister of the Crown.’

DOOLIE'S TRAITOR— A MACEDONIAN TALE

THE house where Doolie lived—his real name was Christodoulos, but the homely-Macedonian taste rejects these pretentious Greek names—differed little from other houses in dilapidated Ochrida. It was a little more ruinous than some, a little less ruinous than others. Three walls at least it had, and there were points of view from which it was impossible to see quite through it. In front was a large open space whence you could watch the sunlit lake with its blue depths, and beyond them the glittering peaks of Albanian mountains. The house of a rebel had stood there once, which the Turks had razed to the ground twenty years' ago, when he fled for his life to free Bulgaria. Behind was a gaunt villa—all vestibule and piazza, with some ribs of naked lathe—where two orphan children, heirs to the ruin, gave hospitality to one aged step-uncle. All Ochrida is one crumbling

DOOLIE'S TRAITOR

monument to the greater past—from the castle that crowns the hill where Bulgarian Czars ruled in the Middle Ages, down to the rotting piers on the margin of the lake. Fifty years ago, they say, there was life and movement in the narrow streets. Merchants came from distant Leipzig to the bazaar, and there were wealthy families which boasted their grand piano and their German governess. But all that is forgotten to-day. There is a quarter called 'Ochrida' in free Sofia, whose population of refugees outnumbers the poor remnant that is left in the mother city.

Poor Doolie was a relic of that greater past, a stranded survivor careened on this rock of memories. He went in rags and lived somehow on crusts earned in the bazaar, happy when he gained a copper to buy some pods of red pepper to season his loaf of coarse bread. He was a man of education, as education goes in Macedonia—that is to say, he knew several tongues not his own. He spoke a strange dialect, compounded in his own muddy brain—a little Greek, a little German, on the framework of his mother tongue, Bulgarian. He lived without wife or child, cherishing by way of family, successive broods of the puppies of the streets, himself as friend-

EASTERN SKETCHES

less as his charges. They shared his crusts while a loaf remained to him, and when he fasted, their moaning served to turn his hunger to a gentle pity for these things more helpless than himself. His Christian neighbours tapped their brows when he passed. The Moslems viewed him with more respect. To them he was a man with a mystery and a past. For in their view, when one throws a loaf to a street dog, it must be to expiate crime and acquire merit. 'May God forgive your sins' is the muttered prayer of a passer-by who sees the act of charity. Now Doolie was always giving to dogs. It followed that Doolie must have a heavy load on his conscience. Clearly he was no ordinary Bulgarian.

There came a day last winter when Doolie began to go about with an air of provoking importance. He foraged with redoubled energy. He used more Greek words than ever, and answered every question with a sonorous *Ja* or *Nein*. The neighbours laughed and asked him if he had had additions to his family. And gradually the truth leaked out. Doolie had a stranger in his shanty—a young man, very dark and gaunt and thin, dressed in European clothes. His

DOOLIE'S TRAITOR

name was Peter—so much Doolie thought he might safely impart. For the rest there were Turks about, and it was better not to speak. All day the quarter canvassed the mystery. The stranger had arrived by the Monastir road, that was certain. He had asked for the house which Doolie tenanted, that also was beyond a doubt — ‘the house where the Delcheffs used to live,’ for Doolie was a squatter in a ruin abandoned by a family which emigrated long ago, no one knew whither. But what could he want in Ochrida? Doolie had spoken of the Turks, and someone thought he had caught the word bomb.

Next day the Synod met in the Bishop's Palace. The Synod was always well attended. It was the only meeting which the Turks tolerated, and, besides, the palace was the only house in decent repair in all Ochrida. Even the Turkish Governor's office had holes in the floor. The notables sat on the divan that lined the walls of the great empty reception room. In one corner sat the bishop, a dignified presence, with a black beard and the pale waxen face of a man who never crosses his own doorstep. The little bell on the table before him rang from time

EASTERN SKETCHES

to time to recall the attention of the laity to the business in hand. But for all the bell could do, an eager discussion agitated the red fezes of the laymen, and rumour chased rumour from ear to ear, and even the bishop had to listen.

‘He came yesterday I tell you,’ said the chief grocer.

‘He has certainly been here a week,’ said a parish priest, ‘my sister’s son saw him with his own eyes.’

‘His name is Peter,’ ventured one, rather timidly.

‘Yes, Peter,’ echoed another, ‘it is certainly Peter.’

‘It’s easy to give a false name,’ quoth a little old money-lender in a corner.

‘I’m sure his name isn’t really Peter,’ shouted a fat man across the room. He owed five pounds to the money-lender.

‘Well, if he isn’t Peter,’ said the grocer, ‘who knows what he may be?’

‘They say he threw a bomb,’ said the head teacher, and a furtive shudder of admiration ran round the room.

‘I have it for certain that he blew up the Bank at Salonica,’ declared another school-master, determined to cap his senior’s guess.

DOOLIE'S TRAITOR

'My wife says she has it for a fact that he's Sarafof in disguise,' quoth the parish priest, looking for confirmation to the bishop. Sarafof was at this moment the hero of the younger bloods among the Macedonians. He came and went like a phantom of wrath and speed. Men who had once shaken hands with him, gave their left thereafter when they greeted friends of commoner clay. All eyes were turned to the episcopal chair. The moment for statesmanship had come. Very slowly the Bishop spoke, in his deep deliberate voice: 'Perhaps the man is a spy.'

'Of course he is a spy,' answered the money-lender in the corner.

'He must be punished,' echoed the man who owed him five pounds.

The fatal word had been spoken which seals a man's fate in Macedonia more surely than a sentence of the Turks. The word ran round the town with the speed of a warning. The Bishop had said that Doolie's stranger was a spy, and the Bishop's judgment was final. For the first time in his life Doolie noted that his neighbours shunned him. Since he harboured a spy perhaps he, too, was a traitor. There seemed somehow

EASTERN SKETCHES

to be no work for him in the bazaar, no sacks of flour to carry, no wood to cut, and that day the dogs went hungry. There was only bread enough for Peter Delcheff. For the stranger had won Doolie's allegiance.

He seemed so young, so gentle, and so helpless. He spoke with a pure accent a literary Bulgarian which extorted Doolie's admiration all the more because he understood it with difficulty. He seemed unutterably weary, and nearly selfless. He wanted nothing. He never drank, he never smoked. He had been long in prison, and he was happy to lie in the ruined room upstairs, where the cold air from the mountains blew in through the broken windows, and the great panorama of the lake stretched into that blue distance, which first fatigued, and then rested the eye. He seldom spoke, but when he did so, his thoughts seemed always to play round certain abstract ideas—freedom and the beauty of self-sacrifice. He talked calmly as though these ideas were ever with him, the sole realities in his world. For the rest he only wanted to see Ochrida, where his race had been cradled. He could see it all from the window; he need not stir. A

DOOLIE'S TRAITOR

silent intimacy grew up between the two men. It never occurred to Peter among his visions that Doolie did not understand him. It never occurred to Doolie that it was necessary to understand.

Time went by, and the hostility of the neighbours, embroidering in their terrified imaginations the idea that Peter was a spy, grew every day more pronounced, and every day poor Doolie, confirmed in his dog-like love, faced his situation with unconscious heroism. It seemed as if all Christendom were against him, since the quarter looked at him askance, and an awful moment came when desperation drove him to ask alms of a Turk. And presently he realised that Peter was very ill. He summoned the doctor, but who dare visit a spy? He went in desperation to an old woman who knew simples, but she crossed herself, and drove him to the door. And then of a sudden it seemed as if the worst were over. One day a neighbour came with a gift of milk. On the morrow there arrived a basket of eggs. The third day brought milk once more and bread. Doolie was jubilant, and a sudden sense of wealth and thankfulness overcame him. He remembered his

EASTERN SKETCHES

dogs and filled a saucer for the first pup that came leaping to his whistle. The creature drank, and staggered and crawled groaning to a corner. The milk was poisoned. At length Doolie understood. Peter had been sentenced by the local revolutionary Committee.

It had been a day of agony and delirium, and Doolie, hungry, ignorant, frightened, could only hold the hot hand of his friend and moisten his lips, swollen with gaol-fever. The afternoon was all but spent, when a sudden access of energy came to the sufferer, more terrible to witness than his stupor. Hitherto he had wanted nothing; only once he had called for a book. He had asked for *Bel Ami*. Had not Doolie got it? Doolie must get it. It was the last word in literature. Perhaps he would never have another chance of reading it. He could not die without reading *Bel Ami*. All the other young men in Sofia had read it. But to-day he had forgotten the book. He called for his boots and drew them on hastily. It was Friday, *the* Friday. All the Turks would be at the mosque. He had something to do, something important. Doolie must not come. If Doolie loved his life he would

DOOLIE'S TRAITOR

stay at home. It would not be well to go into the streets this Friday. This would not be like other Fridays. And then followed something about liberty and self-sacrifice. He staggered to the window. The sun was falling swiftly into the lake, a great ball of fire. Peter watched breathlessly, his eyes wandering from the sun to the mosque, from the mosque to the sun. The great ball of fire seemed to rest upon the minaret, and then it dropped fatally, suddenly, as though a strong hand had thrown it, into the mosque itself. A cloud came over the sick man's brain, and he fell heavily at Doolie's feet. The eyes were closed, but a smile of content played round the corners of the lips, the smile of a man who has accomplished the predestined deed.

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That evening a revolutionary courier arrived, rather later than had been intended, with letters from Sofia. There was one which mentioned confidentially that a young man, named Peter Delcheff, was charged with a mission to blow up a mosque, and the letter enlarged on the importance of his dangerous enterprise. 'So, after all Peter was not a spy,' said the Bishop with his

EASTERN SKETCHES

habitual wisdom. And when Peter was buried next morning the Bishop himself headed the procession, chanting the prayers in his richest robes and his deepest bass. And everyone was puzzled, but chiefly the Turks. 'He must have been very rich, this Peter, they reflected. How else could he have paid for a Bishop to bury him? And acting promptly on this plausible inference, two soldiers and an Albanian conducted a thorough search for hidden treasure in Doolie's shanty that evening. They found nothing but Doolie's dogs, and recompensed themselves for their trouble by breaking a stout cudgel on Doolie's back.

THE SULTAN'S BIRTHDAY—AN ALBANIAN TALE

It was the morning of the Sultan's birthday, and Prizrend kept holiday. The town was full of visitors, and from the snow-clad hills behind it still they came—tall Albanians, slight of build and lithe of limb, each with his rifle on his shoulder and in his belt an armoury of knives and revolvers. Up on the hill the artillery of the crumbling fortress was firing its salutes. Last year a wall had fallen when the crazy cannon thundered their congratulations. It lay where it fell, and the Turkish soldiers sat on its ancient stones rolling their cigarettes, and wondering with a mild fatalistic curiosity whether any more of it would come down this year, and whether it would fall on them. They no more thought of keeping out of harm's way than their officers dreamed of making good last year's dilapidations. In the little Greek chapel—the church had been burned down

EASTERN SKETCHES

a few years ago by the Servians—the priest, who had just finished his annual perfunctory prayer for the long life of Abdul Hamid, was eagerly scanning a little scrap of newspaper which a travelling merchant had brought him from Athens. ‘Can it be true? Can it be true?’ he murmured, as he took off his robes. ‘Praise God, little boy,’ he added, slapping his leg and turning to his acolyte, ‘the Sultan has tuberculosis.’ At the Kaimakam’s (governor’s) house a little further down the hill there was bustle and confusion, and a carriage stood horsed in the courtyard, while the servants got together the few valuables which the scantily furnished rooms contained. Turkish officials who have the misfortune to be sent to a post in Albania take little luggage with them. At any moment a deputation from the tribes may take it into its head to demand their departure. To-day the streets were rather full of armed men, and it was considered prudent to have a carriage ready for emergencies. In the barrack square it was full holiday. A handsome boy with a red rose behind his ear sat perched on a table fiddling madly on his one-stringed lyre, and from time to time an Albanian soldier licked a

THE SULTAN'S BIRTHDAY

coin and pressed it firmly on his forehead, and all the while a score of rude throats chanted in high notes the monotonous song of Ali Pasha :

Ali Pasha, Ali Pasha,
Ali Pasha of Jannina,

a refrain that fires the blood of a true Albanian much as the ballad of William and the Boyne excites an Orangeman. It is an ominous sound to hear by daylight.

The Turkish Konak (Government offices) was nearly deserted. Its whitewashed front—dirty, meaningless, and forbidding—glared like an alien thing among the graceful magic of poplar trees and minarets. Inside its rambling courts only a few veiled women in shapeless robes of black alpaca stood crumpling petitions in their hands. Three or four spies were asleep beside the staircase, and only the mother swallow who had her nest over the door of the Kaimakam's office fluttered restlessly to and fro. At the head of the wooden staircase sat Isha (Isaac) and Madmud, sentinels for the day. Both were in tatters, relics of a uniform whose original colour was now a profound mystery. Their feet were encased in rags tied with

EASTERN SKETCHES

string. Isha wore a white Albanian cap, and Mahmud a fez that once was red. Isha was tall and slim and fair, with a little yellow moustache. Mahmud was dark and hook-nosed, with a curling beard that stuck out from his chin at an odd angle which one associates with Assyrian bas-reliefs—seven years ago he had been torn from his farm near the ruins of Nineveh. They exchanged few words, for Isha knew little Turkish and Mahmud was not at home in Albanian. Isha was bored, a state of mind which Mahmud neither shared nor understood.

‘See,’ said Isha at last, ‘here comes a fat pig to market.’

‘It is the Austrian consul,’ answered Mahmud stolidly.

‘It can hardly walk,’ laughed Isha.

‘It is certainly much too fat,’ said Mahmud.

‘A Christian should never be fat,’ said Isha.

‘No, it is certainly not seeming,’ answered the other.

‘His shadow covers too much ground,’ said Isha, and he spat straight before him.

‘He is very unclean,’ said Mahmud, and he too spat, but cautiously, turning his head.

The little man by now was coming up

THE SULTAN'S BIRTHDAY

the stairs, and his tight uniform began to split. Mahmud rose automatically and presented arms. Isha laughed aloud and rolled in his chair—certainly he had drunk too much *raki* that morning. Steadily the little man mounted the stairs. At each step he panted more audibly. His face grew purple, and the rent in the seams of his uniform grew wider. Mahmud kicked Isha in the shin, and Isha laughed each moment uncontrollably. At length the Consul stood in front of him, with his cavass (body servant) behind him. 'Man,' said the Consul, 'why don't you salute?' His German accent was very funny, indeed, and Isha laughed the louder. And then he chanced to look up. Behind the broad form of the Consul he caught sight of the cavass, whose right hand was plunging angrily into the belt where his revolver protruded. A great rush of blood went to Isha's head. Through the hot air of noon came the refrain from the barrack-yard :

Ali Pasha, Ali Pasha,
Ali Pasha of Jannina.

Isha became a wild creature of instinct. He seized his rifle, pointed it straight at the Consul, and pulled the trigger. The Consul

EASTERN SKETCHES

staggered back, and, after the report, one could hear something falling with a thin splashing thud. It was the swallow's nest. Madmud had knocked up the barrel of Isha's rifle.

It was what the diplomatists call a serious incident. The fat little Consul demanded Isha's blood, and his carriage stood ready harnessed to leave Prizrend. The telegraph wires were very busy, and in Constantinople messengers ran to and fro between the Embassies and the Porte. Isha was in gaol, pacing angrily up and down, while his fellow prisoner laughed at him. 'He missed a giaour at six paces,' said they, and Isha swore by the beard of his father that he would fire straight when the Turks released him. At headquarters things went slowly. There was so much else to be settled. An Austrian Jew remembered suddenly that the late Sultan's predecessor owed him a thousand pounds for a diamond necklace supplied to his harém. In the lapse of years the thousand pounds had multiplied by ten. And then there was the case of the Austrian Armenian who had been killed by mistake during the massacre three years before. It was a very com-

THE SULTAN'S BIRTHDAY

plicated incident indeed, and Isha was nearly forgotten. But at length the money was paid—a gunboat or two sailed from Trieste at the psychological moment. The only difficulty was Isha himself. He had been condemned by court-martial, and the Vienna papers had written leading articles on his death. But he himself lay safe in Prizrend gaol.

‘If we release him,’ said the chief of Police, ‘he will certainly murder the Consul.’

‘And if we execute him for shooting a giaour,’ answered the Kaimakam, ‘we shall have all the clans upon us.’

‘What is to be done?’ said the Chief of Police.

‘A man may die in many ways,’ remarked the Kaimakam.

‘Allah be praised,’ answered the chief of Police, ‘there are many roads to Paradise.’

The weeks passed, and Isha grew pale and weak. The prison was hot and foul, and for the first time in his life Isha knew what it was to have fever. He began to think, and the new experience frightened and tired him. In his delirium he saw the snows of the Shar Dagh, and felt the cold mountain air. Once a kindly gaoler allowed

EASTERN SKETCHES

his mother to visit him. 'Pray, child,' she sobbed over him, 'you must pray.' 'Nay, mother,' he answered, 'it is the will of Allah,' and he turned wearily on his side and slept. It can have been a few moments later when he awakened with a start. His mother's fingers were moving in some strange way over his forehead, and she was murmuring 'Georghi! Georghi!' And then she caught his head in her arms, and whispered a tale that made him blush and wince. She told him that his grandfather had borne the name of George, and how the great Ali Pasha of Jannina, had converted him with a scimitar at his throat. And then she whispered that he himself, and his father before him, had been baptised in secret on the same day that they were circumcised.

'And am I Georghi or Isha?' asked he, bewildered.

'Nay, child, God knows,' said she. 'But pray, pray to St George.'

'And who is St George?' said he.

'Oh!' she answered. 'he rides a white horse, and he carries a spear, and he helps the Christians.'

'Is he the same as Scanderbeg?' asked Isha.

'Perhaps he is,' said his mother, 'who

THE SULTAN'S BIRTHDAY

knows who he is? But he has power with God.'

That night Isha slept a troubled sleep. He thought he was free at last from his prison. He was in the mountains, where gentians and the Alpine roses cover the ground between the snowdrifts. He had his rifle on his back, and a good horse between his knees. He was singing boldly and firing in the air, a free man among the rocks. And he was not alone. There were others with him, bold men, great robbers, and they smiled kindly to one another, for they were bound by the Albanian word of honour. 'He is with us, brother,' said they. And Isha divined that the great man on the white horse was no other than St George and Scanderbeg. 'The mountain is ours, little brother,' said they, and he answered, because the words came to his tongue: 'Aye, the mountain is ours, and the foreigners are gone.' And then they galloped wildly, shouting and firing in the air, and under his feet he saw that his horse was trampling on red fezes and crescent flags. And St George had transfixed the dragon, and sometimes he thought its head was the head of the Austrian Consul, and sometimes it was the

EASTERN SKETCHES

head of the Turkish Kaimakam. 'No matter,' he thought, 'they are both foreigners.'

When he awoke he was still in prison, but a new thought filled him. 'To the hills!' sang a clarion in his blood, 'to the hills that belong to the Albanians!' And he saw himself a great brigand, making war on Turks and Austrians alike. He must have been talking aloud, for the gaoler was standing beside him and saying with an odd smile, 'Yes, you shall go up to the hills to-day.'

'What,' said Isha, 'am I free?'

'As free as a ghost,' laughed the gaoler, 'and see, here is a cup of coffee to cheer you on your way.'

And then Isha took the cup and drank. 'The coffee tastes very strong,' said Isha, 'and very bitter.'

'It is prison coffee,' answered the gaoler.

Then Isha rose up, but his legs gave way beneath him. 'You must help me,' said Isha, 'I am faint.'

'Nay,' answered the gaoler, 'in two minutes you will be able to go anywhere alone—two little minutes.'

And presently Isha fell forward on his face towards the hills and the open door.

A BOOK OF MARTYRS

It came into my hands four years ago, this Book of Martyrs. To the Cretan priest who sold it it was only an illuminated missal, a thing of price that enshrined the pious labour of another century. The good saint of his chapel had preserved it, to save her minister in his hour of need. He was, indeed, a solitary witness to his creed. In that last agony of the long struggle by which Crete was freed, the town of Candia had been wholly given over to the infidel. The ruined streets told their tale of vengeance, and amid their charred confusion, the wreckage of interrupted lives recalled the smouldering memories of massacre. A dozen Christians, servants of the foreign Consuls for the most part, still dared to linger in the Moslem town, eking out the hours of sunshine in a secluded café. The rest had not yet ventured back to their homes—and danger. My priest had other fears. A

EASTERN SKETCHES

kindly act twelve centuries old kept him secure. He was of the Order which once sheltered Mahomet in its monastery on Sinai. To this day tradition makes it the one fearless Christian community in modern Turkey, for the debt of gratitude is not yet paid, and wherever they may wander, these monks whose predecessors entertained a prophet unaware, are the guests of Islam. My priest pottered at his ease in the chapel garden, while a gendarme, charged with his safety, sat at the courtyard gate in an arm-chair and played with a kitten in the easy manner peculiar to Turkish sentries. The Bashibazouks might storm up the narrow lane on their way to raid the Christian interior, the hungry tom-toms would beat at night through the fast of Ramazan, until even the English officers lay awake in their tents and fingered their revolvers, but the priest slept secure on the pillow of a good deed. He had an easy view of life, that fitted his refuge. Only the diminishing barrel of oil filled him with anxiety. There were so few of his people at hand to care for his simple wants. But he would expound his confident philosophy over a cup of sweet coffee. Its lack was not originality. He

A BOOK OF MARTYRS

believed in the future of a Church which, as he would say, had bred in its lap Constantine and Pericles, Plato and Paul. The shameful heathen past had for him no existence. If you pressed him on the point, he inclined to think that the pre-Christian Cretans had been Jews. For does not the Old Testament come before the New? On that view of history the future seemed secure. He reckoned Socrates among the Early Fathers. A race so constant would surely come by its own.

The missal suggested a somewhat different reading of history. It bore witness to the vicissitudes of the Cretan Church. Some patient scribe had endorsed it in the easy days before the Turkish conquest. There are marks of wealth and leisure in the picture of the woman of Samaria at the well that fronted the first page. In those days there were patrons who encouraged the native artist, and money to spare on precious inks and gold lettering. The careful hand that obscured the meaning of the ritual in arabesques and antic flourishes was no novice at the task. A later century had bound the book with hasty stitches in ragged cardboard. Had its ivory boards been sold to meet a

EASTERN SKETCHES

debt in the stress of some earlier insurrection? Even the ritual itself was rich in memories. The florid letters inscribed the names of martyrs. The gilded initials were so many tombstones for murdered saints. It moved to reverence with its scarlets and its purples, like the tattered banners in a Norman church. Here were the fragrant names of holy women whose bodies had burned in Pagan flames, an incense to the faith; here the record of murdered children who cry day and night, 'Holy, holy, holy,' at the Apocalyptic throne; and here the strong names of men, which still vibrate like a trumpet call when the battle is joined on an eastern hillside between the Crescent and the Cross. It was a glorious roll-call, this book of martyrs, which the Cretan scribe had adorned with gilded Amens and azure Alleluias, a great song of courage and of triumph.

Only on turning the pages to the end did one realise that for this exalted scribe the past alone was glorious. On the vacant sheets that followed the last blaze of the benediction, straggled a few jottings in an unaffected cursive hand in faded ink. For the most part they were figures—a sum in

A BOOK OF MARTYRS

addition that may have recorded the month's outlay on olives and wine, a note that seemed to refer to some trivial debt, a calculation that probably sought to fix the date of an Easter, or the length of some irksome fast—ephemeral records that lived only because they lay here, parasites on the dignified past. In the midst stood a single memorandum, laconic, straggling, unconscious. On such a Sunday in such a year—so it ran—two centuries ago, Brother Peter was murdered by the Turks. He lies amid the rubbish of this unworthy cemetery without epitaph or honour, a mere name in brown ink on the flyleaf of this book of martyrs, where other victims go in purple and in scarlet. The thought of him becomes a fascination. By what death did he die, and with what brave word did he meet his persecutors? Had he led a band in that historic siege that raged for so many years round the stout walls of Candia, where the Moslem besiegers still lie in their green coffins, waiting for the Resurrection? Or was he the studious priest for whose use those beautiful Greek texts, fresh from the presses of Venice, which with luck one may still find in old houses, were imported to the

EASTERN SKETCHES

island? Who shall say? He was only Brother Peter, and no one dreamed of adding his name to the martyrs' roll-call. The age had passed when such a death seemed glorious.

It happened, some days later, that I rode out, still pondering on Brother Peter, to a village on the coast. It was a place of memories so confused and so various that one lost account of time, so closely did the centuries jostle in one contemporary crowd. By the shore there were pans of stone and concrete which the ancients used to flood with sea-water at high tide, that the sun might make salt for them by evaporation. The great Cyclopean blocks still lay about, as sharp and clear as in the days when Crete had her hundred cities. The fishermen launch their boats at the place, and when the storm beats high, and the Nereid peers over the bow amid the foam, they still answer her anxious question with the old pagan formula that calms the waves, 'Thy brother the Great Alexander lives and reigns.' For in the imagination of the Greek race, history has blended with mythology, and the heroes are still the brethren of the fairies. The chapel hard by was

A BOOK OF MARTYRS

built while Byzantium was still an Imperial city. It is poor and timid of outline, and the frescoes on its walls have been plastered with whitewash, lest they should tempt the iconoclastic zeal of some Puritan Pasha. You may hear the peasants within it droning an evensong that is a lament for a lost paradise, and as they stand in the dim candle-light they seem for the moment but shadows and exiles thrust out from some sunnier place. Even their tragedies seem dwarfed by the past about them. They, too, had their obscure martyr. That very day the widow Stamatiké had ventured too far, culling herbs in the field for the meagre pot. Hunger and a crying child had made her venturesome. The raiding Bashi-bazouks had found her, driven her into the sea, and shot her down when she refused to embrace Islam. The village felt a very human grief. It was crushed and miserable, but quite unconscious of any dignity in its kinswoman's fate. It only thought of having the facts reported at the foreign Consulates. The martyrs' roll was closed.

What hand is it that has written its irrevocable *finis* to the book of martyrs? Men still suffer for their creed in these regions,

EASTERN SKETCHES

and die gladly and of their own free will. But the Church engraves no missals with the names of those who perish. Is it that a martyr must be also in some sense a revolutionary? Faith and courage are not enough. He must die for some creed that has not yet arrived. The legions who fall in the name of a world-wide Church, are the servants of authority, the neglected vedettes of an army which has conquered. They face a human tyrant bravely. But they have not dared the metaphysical terrors that beset the early innovators. Theirs is not a triumphant assertion of individual faith. They had not wrestled with old gods, or broken their fealty to a custom. Beyond the lands where Cross and Crescent are still at war, Christendom has on its side the wealth and the numbers, the cannon and the machines. But the early saints defied science and probability, philosophers and emperors in league. A martyr must die for a gospel which it is still possible to doubt. The golden Alleluia crowns the rebel's faith.

THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE

THE 'Athéné' lay off Volo, among a small fleet of transports. The Turks were hurrying out of Greece. The thirty days' war was already a memory, and the year-long occupation of Thessaly had come at last to an end. A long line of soldiers was filing out of the town, and down the quay, and up the gangway of the vessel. Their uniforms had sobered from blue to brown in their ten years' service, and nothing caught the light but the white of the rags that peeped through their coats. A band on the quay uttered the last word of barbarism. The Sultan's hymn rang out with the slow stride of its almost Wagnerian rhythm, and then came the impressive pause when the instruments were silenced, and the men on deck shouted with one voice, 'May the Sultan live for ever!' Then, with the band still playing, the transport got under way and out into the open. A fresh stream of sad-coloured uniforms was

EASTERN SKETCHES

pouring already from the town, and another transport glided to the quay.

The 'Athéné' crossed the bay in the wake of the transport. She was a crazy old boat, laden to her last ton, with a terrific list to starboard. Every inch of the deck was littered with baggage — pots and cradles, bundles and tin trunks of the gayest colours. Groups of women squatted everywhere, some of them veiled, most of them too poor and dispirited to care about propriety. I had mounted the saloon deck, but an awning and a curtain were stretched across it, and a Turkish soldier warned me off. It was the harem of some General. The same fate met me wherever I strayed. There were no Christians on board, and the Turks had turned the little Greek coaster into a sacred ark. In the fore-castle families huddled in groups, and a child playing with a lamp, the mother washing a garment, and the man smoking or sleeping, until the blundering foot of the infidel chanced to awaken him. At last the captain came to my rescue, and invited me to take up my quarters on the bridge. The brilliant lines of the coast were narrowing now to the bay's mouth. Bare and brilliant it was, as though it felt nothing

THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE

of the blot of an alien invasion. The land embraced us like some earth-red arm tanned by the sun and the sea. The water was smooth, and our ship raised a wave as she went along, a wave that mirrored the hills on its smooth and rounded crest. We had one companion on the bridge. She may have been three and twenty. She wore no head dress, and her costume, of some soft terra-cotta stuff, was wholly unconventional. She seemed to defy classification. So various was the face that one might spend an hour in debating whether it were beautiful. The features suggested no recognised type. The chin was finely drawn, long and pointed. The lips were at one moment a quivering index of bewilderment and hesitation, and at the next grew shapely and impassive. The nose was short and the eyes close together, a Turkish trait, but the brow was frank and clear and admirably developed. She piqued curiosity, yet every movement suggested dignity and reserve.

For a day we sat on the bridge together, the lady, the captain, and I, scarcely exchanging a word. The atmosphere of the ship was singularly desolate. The sun beat hotly on the deck, and the cool summit of Olympus

EASTERN SKETCHES

was very far away. The soldiers and refugees seemed sullen. Even the women did not talk, and the faces one saw, when veils were lifted, gasped with fatuity and boredom. They seemed to fall into two types. There was the genuine Osmanli beauty—fat, round, and pasty, with powdered cheeks and blackened eyelids, listless, contented, immobile. Another type was thin and distinguished, the features straight and classical, with a hint of sad experience somewhere in eyes or mouth, but it too in its turn wan, dispirited, immobile. The day fell into two portions, marked off by lunch and by dinner. The lady of the bridge took her meals in her own cabin; the talk at table was in Turkish, for all the passengers were officers, except a civilian whom I disliked, I knew not why. The day ran to its close, wearisome and oppressive. The lady of the bridge was silent, and the Greek captain answered my queries curtly. We sat all three till nightfall in the midst of the Turkish migration, and then an Imam disturbed us. He had come to look at the compass in order to find the direction of Mecca. A minute later prayers had begun. ‘We three are the only Christians on board,’ said I to

THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE

myself. It was a sort of bond in the silence.

It was the evening of the next day before we broke the spell. I had drawn the captain into talk about Crete and the war. He had the genial, accommodating Greek nature. He would joke about Athenian politics and make game of the Larissa retreat. Or he would inveigh against the Turks and tell tales of their atrocities. We were deep in talk when the lady joined us. She took her seat and opened her book, but soon she was taking her part in the discussion. She had been in Volo when the Turks entered it. She spoke of them with bitterness, and seemed to believe the worst of their conduct during the occupation, but when she came to talk of the Greeks her comments were singularly detached. I had never met such absence of partisanship in a Greek before, for a Greek I took her to be.

When the Captain left us, we talked on in French. We fell to discussing the Turks generally and the women on the deck below us. Her home was in Constantinople; she knew Turkish, and she spoke intimately of the life of the harem. The women she regarded as something too familiar for discussion, too uninteresting for description.

EASTERN SKETCHES

But little by little her talk grew animated, with a concealed passion in it that leapt out only in a flash of the eyes or a chance phrase that escaped her.

‘They are animals in a cage,’ she declared, with a strange vehemence. ‘They are so stupid that they do not even gossip. What can they know of the world? Why, they have no curiosity even about the life of their own husbands. Their sole interest is dress and sweetmeats. They cease to care about their own sons when they grow too old for the nursery. It is death in life! Oh! the cruel monotony of it—an existence where nothing happens but formal visits to other cages, and festivities when the other women come to help you cut the finger-nails of your month-old baby.’

It was a savage picture, and I told her of a Moslem family in Candia where I had often been a guest. The head of the house was a doctor, a Liberal and a Young Turk. His eldest daughter was in a sense an educated girl. Stranger though I was, I had been allowed to meet her. She read a good deal, knew something of the world, and was at least many removes from the human animal which the lady of the bridge had pictured for

THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE

me. She showed a keen interest in the story, but it only led her to inveigh with bitterness against the attempt to educate these women. 'The Sultan has at last forbidden it ; he has done well,' she cried. At that moment the sinister civilian came on to the bridge talking to a young Turkish staff officer. She turned towards them and repeated her words with a degree of passion which I could not understand. The civilian looked coldly at her, the officer stared in blank amazement. Both moved quickly away.

'Imagine, if you can—but how can a man conceive it—imagine the plight of these Mahomedan girls who have received a European education in some French school. Their minds expand. They learn to think. They are full of interest in the great world and its problems. From their books and their teachers they have absorbed the standpoint of the western woman. They have even read in novels of men who are capable of chivalry and respect for women. To their fancy everything is possible. And then suddenly comes the day when some brute, an elderly man perhaps, who has divorced many wives, and lived with multitudes of

EASTERN SKETCHES

women, seeks them in marriage. The gates of life close on them. They go back to the stagnation of a harem, and they alone among their companions, know that there is a world beyond its shutters.'

There was a personal note, an authenticity, a cry from a real experience, in this picture that she drew. I was startled, for it is rare to find among Christians so much fellow-feeling for Mahomedans. She seemed to detect my surprise and retreated from it, as though somehow she had been irreticent. Gradually she subdued her tones, spoke in a more commonplace strain, paused, and looked up at me with a smile. 'You see, I was brought up in a French school,' she explained; 'there were many Moslem girls in it. I have lost sight of them now. It is kinder to bury them completely.'

We talked afterwards of indifferent things. She was singularly well read, and her judgments on men and books were fresh and independent. I had never met so cultivated a woman in the East before. She still held a volume of Loti on her knee, and we fell to discussing his writing, book by book. It was *Pêcheur d'Islande* which she was reading, but the talk turned to *Fantôme d'Orient*, that

THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE

melancholy romance of Stamboul, with its lament over a life engulfed in the harem. Again she grew passionate. She found the misery too real, the lament too piercing. She could not read Loti's Oriental books, but she was full of praise for his tales of the sea. I had *Matelot* in my cabin and fetched it for her. Darkness was falling, and once more the Imam had come to find the direction of Mecca. Silence came over us, as the whole ship fell to prayer and we glided upon her through the Dardanelles, an exception tolerated in the ark of migration. Soon we parted for the night. She took my book, repeating twice, with odd punctiliousness, 'I shall see you in the morning and give it you back before we land.'

The dawn was breaking when we passed Prince's Island and came in sight of Galata Tower. I was early on deck, watching the boats filled with Greek rowers and Armenian porters swarming round the ship. The refugees were silent and unobservant. They seemed to have no curiosity, no sense for the beauties of the place. They were once more in a world where there are more mosques than churches, where even the Christian dons a fez and the law of Islam is supreme. They were at home ; the migration was at an end.

EASTERN SKETCHES

The lady of the bridge had not yet appeared. I wondered what had happened, and then the sinister civilian with the fez entered her cabin. She came out leaning on his arm. Her face was enveloped in a yashmak (veil), and she passed me without a glance. In a moment she had disappeared, and a small boat carried the couple swiftly to the quay.

The captain stood near me. 'Who is that man?' said I. 'His name is Halil Effendi. He's an army contractor. There's many a tale at Volo of the fortunes he made out of the war. Why I heard—'

I interrupted brusquely. 'But the lady? Why is a Greek lady dressed in a yashmak? And what is she to him?'

'Greek,' said he with a rough laugh, 'she's no more Greek than you are. Why, she's the fellow's niece.'

'Then why did she sit unveiled and talk to us?'

'The last day of liberty is sweet, my friend. It's a queer story. They say she had a good education at Constantinople—in one of those French schools, I suppose. And after that she thought herself too good for a harem, so she ran away. She settled in Volo with some girl-friend or other—that was before

THE LADY OF THE BRIDGE

the war—and made her living by teaching in a school. Then came the war, and with the Turks came her uncle, the contractor. One day, as fate would have it, he saw her over a wall. It was all over then. The Turkish military police handed her over to her lawful guardian, and he's taking her back to her father in Constantinople. They'll soon find a husband for her. A nice girl, a pretty girl, too. And she likes us Greeks.'

The swift little boat had reached the quay. A carriage with wooden shutters stood at the steps. The door opened, and the veiled lady of the bridge stepped in. The door and the shutters closed after her. She had returned to Constantinople, a captive from the Turk's conquest, an unwilling item in the Moslem migration. She would lay aside her books, forget the language of liberty, and, married perhaps to some Pasha, share with his Circassian slave the honour of entertaining the populations of the neighbouring 'cages,' when they came to cut the nails of her month-old baby. She had tasted freedom and she had said of other women in her case, 'It is kinder to bury them completely.' The phrase had already the ring of an epitaph.

A ·LEVANTINE MESSIAH

SALONICA is a town which creates in the traveller a singular illusion of isolation. It has an atmosphere all its own, which surrounds it more effectually than its lofty bastions and its mediæval walls. The stranger awakens on the day after his arrival to wonder by what miracle he came. Approach it by sea; and an intolerable obsession of loneliness overtakes you. What has this cramped town, with its narrow streets, its sordid life, its dingy commercialism, to do with the Greek waters of the day before, with the fairy gulf of Volo, the home of the Argonauts, or the towering presence of Olympus? Approach it from land, and the same incongruity puzzles and bewilders. Behind you lie the Macedonian Alps, and the valley of the Vardar with its simple villages, its rocky cañons, its primitive peasants, the long panorama of unspoiled mountains and idyllic dales, through which

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

your train meandered as it brought you from Europe and Uskub. You are in another world, where men in the costume of a mediæval Ghetto buy and sell by telegraph. In this meeting point of many races, each stock seems to have abandoned its ideals, its morals, its distinction ; and the town, for all the picturesqueness of its architecture and its monuments, talks a *lingua franca* of materialism, a *patois* of nasty pleasures and petty gains.

And yet Salonica has a racial character which is lacking in other Levantine sea-ports. The Greeks, elsewhere so conspicuous, are less obtrusive here. The commerce of the place is in other hands, and their tongue is not the current language of the streets. The Turks, rulers and overlords though they are, seem strangers in the place, save among the ruins of the upper citadel, where they tone their life into accord with decay. For Salonica is that unique thing in the modern world, a great town where the Jews form a decided majority of the population. They are the children of the exiles whom Ferdinand and Isabella drove from Spain ; and, in the unchanging world of the East, they have preserved

EASTERN SKETCHES

language and costumes and habits. Their mangled, distorted Spanish is still the speech of the bazaars ; and the men still wear the long gabardine and the flowing beard of the traditional Shylock. They are the real masters of Salonica. They control its commerce, they own its land, they manage its Press ; they create a certain public opinion which no Christian minority can defy with impunity. They have lost the secretive and furtive attitude which they assume elsewhere. They rule the streets. They are good men of their hands, and capable of holding their own, and even of paying off old scores, if there is talk of massacre or riot. The quays belong to them ; and their Jewish porters and boatmen brook no competition from Bulgars or Albanians.

But Salonica is even more Jewish than it seems. Your first impression, as you stroll through the bazaars, is that here, alone in the Levant, the Turk has taken to trade. You notice over even the more prosperous shops unwonted Moslem names. Here Hassan deals in boots from Paris, Chemal vends sewing-machines, and Abdul offers the curiosities of the place to European visitors. You enter, with a pleasant anticipa-

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

tion of courtly manners and a comfortable lack of enterprise. But the familiar Jewish physiognomy greets you from behind the counter; and your Hassan has proved himself as shrewd and shameless a bargainer as any Abraham or Joseph. In the office of the Vali, the same surprise awaits you. A certain enterprise and alertness, always hostile, always conspicuous, but unexpectedly intelligent, pervades the movements of the officials who ought to be Turks. For, in fact, rather more than half of the Moslem population of Salonica is Jewish by descent. They form a sect apart, equally abhorred by Israel and Islam. To the Jews, the 'Dounme,' as they are called, are simply renegades. To the Turks they seem very doubtful acquisitions. For there has been no blending and confusion of blood; the Dounme retain their sense of nationality, which is itself an offence against the spirit of Mahomedanism. They are organised in clans of their own; and it is said that they practise their Jewish rites in secret. Certain it is, that their chief concern is to maintain the purity of their race, as though they had some secret possession, some as yet unrealised inheritance which can descend only

EASTERN SKETCHES

from Jewish father to Jewish son. They conform indeed to the external rites of the mosque. They enjoy the privileges of office and power which belong to the dominant religion. But nothing has weakened their original exclusiveness, or dimmed the memory of the great upheaval amid which they deserted Judaism. They never intermarry with Turks: and, such is their dread of an alliance with a Turkish family, that their children are commonly betrothed within the limits of the sect before they are born. The ceremony once performed, there is a ready answer to any Turkish suitor; and if by ill chance it should happen that the betrothed infants turn out to be of the same sex, a fresh arrangement is hastily made. For more than two centuries now, they have handed down the tradition of their Levantine Messiah; and their fidelity strikes the one incongruous note in the drab commonplace of the town. They date from a superb outburst of faith which shook all the Ghettos of Europe and the East; and a singular irony of history has maintained them as its witnesses and victims, renegadoes in their loyalty, idealists in Salonica.

The *Annus Mirabilis* was a time of

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

wonder and expectation in Turkey as in Europe. It was an age of movement and adventure. In the intervals of the war with Austria and the heroic siege of Candia, a pretender claimed the Turkish throne, and a Mahdi arose in Kurdistan. Mankind was ripe for the end of time. The Fifth Monarchy men expected the second Advent. Newton was busy with the Apocalypse; and Napier of Merchiston had invented logarithms, the better to trace out the meaning of the fatal numbers of Revelations. The very name of the year was big with significance; and the divines of the reformed countries read the number of the mystic Beast writ large in 1666. It was generally agreed that the time was one of special blessing for the Jews; and opinion was divided only as to whether they were to be converted in a body to Christianity, or restored to the Holy Land. There were omens enough, and rumours of great happenings. An eclipse of the moon set conjecture going in Turkey; and were there not also Dryden's 'two dire comets which have scourged the town'? It seemed much to the point that a mysterious barque appeared upon the northern coast of Scotland with

EASTERN SKETCHES

silken sails and cordage, manned by mariners who spoke no tongue but Hebrew. Still more definite were the rumours of the marching hosts of Israelites who were already on their way to the Land of Promise. They were always seen in the appropriate place—upon the banks of the River Sabbath ; and opinions only differed as to the exact locality of this sabbatic stream, not to mention a trivial dispute between two schools of thought, of which one held that the waters of the river dried up on the Sabbath day, while the other contended that it was only then that they flowed. But, while debate raged round the nature of the Sabbath, there was no ocular witness to deny the marching hosts. It would be strange if no Messiah had arisen in the East to take advantage of this popular temper, which craved for deceit and courted imposture. Europe indeed had much commerce with the Levant ; but as yet there was no import of alien civilisations and exotic enlightenment. Indeed, at this period the chief import from Europe into Turkey seems to have been spurious coins of silver-plated copper, of which whole shiploads went from Amsterdam and London to Smyrna, bearing

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

the ironical motto: *Voluit hanc Asia mercem*. It was a very simple world.

The Man of Destiny proved to be a Spanish Jew named Sabatai Sevi, who was born in Smyrna about 1626. He was the son of a tradesman of the place, a commonplace respectable personage, well known to the European Colony, who gained his living by acting as broker to an English merchant. It is, no doubt, to this accident that we are indebted for the spirited and circumstantial account which Rycaut gives of him in his *History of the Ottoman Empire*. Sir Paul Rycaut was one of the ablest men who ever represented England in Turkey; and his writings, which have fallen into utterly undeserved oblivion, are a mine of information regarding the condition of Turkey in his day. He was consul in Smyrna between 1660 and 1677; he knew every detail of this curious movement of enthusiasm, and he describes it, if not with sympathy, at least with a good deal of humour.* Sabatai

* His narrative was first written for John Evelyn, and was published anonymously over the initials J. E., under the title *Three Great Imposters*. It must have had a great success; for it was pirated and incorporated without acknowledgment into a curious German history of the Anabaptists (*Historia Denen Widertäufren*).

EASTERN SKETCHES

was, from his early youth, a notable scholar and divine ; and his favourite study was the Cabala. Long before he thought of declaring himself the Messiah, he seems to have been busied with innovations and schisms. He was, says Rycaut, 'so cunning a Sophister, that he invented a new Doctrine in their Law, and drew to the profession of it so many Disciples as raised one day a tumult in the Synagogue.' For this he was banished the city, and sought refuge in Salonica, where he seems at once to have made partisans and acquired a degree of consideration which assisted his later professions. He was twice married and twice divorced ; and there are some tales about these matrimonial adventures which stir the merriment of Ricaut, who had the genuine Restoration instinct for gaiety and scandal. After these mishaps, he undertook a pilgrimage among the dispersed Jewish colonies of the Levant, and at Alexandria he found a bride who, by one account, had shut herself in a convent (*sic*), resolved to await the Messiah and to marry no other, though Ricaut says of her merely that she was a Pole or a German, 'her original and country not very well known,' which is, after all, no

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

uncommon case in the Levant. His pilgrimage ended at Jerusalem, where he found a certain Nathan, who undertook to play the rôle of his prophet and forerunner. Ricaut has little to say about this personage ; but in the scanty records of time he fills at first a larger part than Sabatai himself. One suspects that Nathan was in reality the inspirer and contriver of the whole imposture, and the bolder spirit of the two.

At Jerusalem, Nathan and Sabatai began their propaganda by abolishing all the fasts of the Jews, since 'the bridegroom being come, nothing but joy and triumph ought to dwell in their habitations.' But Nathan's chief concern was to send out letters to all the Jews of Europe announcing the advent of the Messiah, and dwelling upon the graciousness and sanctity of this King of Kings, 'who shall give us talons of iron to be worthy to stand under the shadow of his ass.' The letters arrived when the atmosphere of expectation had already raised the hopes of the Jews to a point where the fulfilment of prophecy seemed the only normal and inevitable sequel. There is some curious evidence of this excitement in a booklet issued in hot haste in 1666 from a Protestant press in

EASTERN SKETCHES

Nürnberg.* The pious author, one Pastor Buchenroeder, explains, in a quaintly fulsome preface, that he was moved to write by the alarm of a certain knightly person in the town, who feared that even Christians might be led astray by the cult of the Messiah ; but it is significant that he does not know Sabatai Sevi's name, and reserves the vials of his wrath for the prophet Nathan. The organisation of the Messianic movement was apparently so complete, that news sheets, which the pastor refers to as the *Messias-Zeitung*, were periodically printed with the latest letters from the East ; and he describes the Jews, in their eagerness to obtain them, leaping to and fro from their windows across the narrow streets of the Ghetto. The Christian world was puzzled and uncertain ; and, while one half of it inclined to expect some great event, the other smiled, and prepared to make its profit from the amazingly unworldly attitude of the Jews. Buchenroeder has a message for both. He seeks to show the credulous that the omens cited by Nathan are not really a fulfillment of prophecy, while

* Eilende Messias Juden Post Oder Gründliche Widerlegung des heutigen Gedichts von den neuerstandenen Messia der Juden und seines Propheten Nathans.

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

to the commercially-minded sceptics he administers a stern rebuke. It is to him a scandalous thing that Christians should lend their presses, and employ their capital, in distributing Messianic newspapers which deny 'the one true and proper Messiah, Jesus Christ.' And yet, even he must admit the temptation. Everywhere the Jews were preparing for the end of this world, and behaving much as Christians comported themselves towards the year 1000—refusing their daughters in marriage, winding up their affairs and declining to ply their trades as heretofore. He poses the casuistic problem : Whether a Christian might not avail himself of this situation to buy Jewish gear cheaply ; but happily resolves it by pointing out that the Jews are 'strangers within our gates, and also our neighbours, whose goods we must not covet.' His manipulation of prophecy is less interesting ; but, in refuting the *Messias-Zeitung*, he quotes or summarises some curious passages which are much the best thing in his book, as Celsus is the better part of Origen. From these fragments, of which the first is dated August 1665, one can piece together the narrative which so moved the Jews that they sold their posses-

EASTERN SKETCHES

sions and prepared for the pilgrimage to the East.

‘Suddenly and unlooked for a vast concourse of people has appeared upon the confines of the desert’ (apparently the Sahara), ‘as is supposed to the number of 8000 troops, each troop of from 100 to 1000 men. These are the ten tribes of Israel; and they have for captain a holy leader who goes before them and works great miracles. He has the gift of tongues, and knows men’s hearts so soon as he sees their countenances. Whoever opposes this people is overcome. They have already taken towns innumerable, and have put all that they found within them to the sword, save only the Israelites. No woman is to be seen in the camp of Israel. They have many horses’ (here the Pastor objects that the horse was a profane animal, patronised not by Moses, but by Pharoah), ‘their tents are black and their appointments perfect. Fire and cloud are seen on the path of the marching Israelites; but, on the Sabbath, all trace of their camp disappears. They have been seen on the summit of a sandy hill, where, from a great hole, they dug out a brazen trumpet, which they will blow thrice, and, at the third blast, summon all the world to them.’

October brings more detailed news of Nathan’s movements. •He is at Gaza (how unscriptural, remarks the Pastor, to seek refuge among the Philistines!) and has convinced the Rabbis by great signs and wonders leading them to the grave of the prophet Zachariah, who was slain between the temple and the altar. Indeed, the prophet himself came forward, in the guise of a little old man carrying water and a pail, and immediately washed away their sins. The Turks, too, are

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

much impressed with Nathan : and the Pasha of Gaza has kissed his hand. As for the Messiah, he is referred to only casually, as a young man of exemplary life whom Nathan has annointed King of Judea. Nathan proposes to go with the King himself to Constantinople, place himself before the Grand Turk in person, and demand from him the restitution of all Judea, which will certainly come to pass, and not only so, but the Grand Turk himself shall set the crown upon the head of the Messiah.

So far, Pastor Buchenroeder. Sir Paul Rycaut also gives this prophecy, but in more picturesque terms—he was not engaged on a controversial work. For nine months, it appears, the Messiah was to be hidden, and thereafter he was to appear before the Grand Signior and lead him in chains.

Returning again mounted on a celestial Lyon with his bridle made of serpents with seven heads, accompanied with his brethren the Jews who inhabited on the other side of the River Sabation, he should be acknowledged for the sole monarch of the Universe ; and then the Holy Temple should descend from Heaven, already built, framed and beautified, wherein they should offer sacrifices for ever.

Hitherto, Sabatai Sevi had hardly appeared to the world in person or by name. He was known only in the Levant ; and yet the

EASTERN SKETCHES

ferment that followed his proclamation had gone so far, that it excited the alarm of a commonplace, learned man in the heart of Germany. All Jewry was waiting for a Messiah ; and it wanted only the confident assertion that he had appeared, to win the credence of a whole race. It was a time for penance and purification, but also for rejoicing. The illustrator of the pirated German version of Rycaut's narrative gives us a lurid picture of the torments which the Jews inflicted on themselves to prepare for the grand consummation. He shows us their bodies buried to the neck in the earth ; others roll naked in snow, some scourge themselves, some prick themselves with thorns, while a few pour molten wax on bleeding shoulders. In the Levant, trade was at a standstill for a year or more. It must have been a Golden Age around the Mediterranean. Turkey was grown honest ; and the Bazaars were silent. ' All business,' says Rycaut, who watched this strange madness from the Levant Company's factory in Smyrna,

was laid aside, none worked, or opened shop, unless to clear his warehouse of merchandise at any price : who had superfluity in household stuff, sold it for what he could ;

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

but yet not to Jews, for they were interdicted from bargains or sales, on the pain of excommunication, pecuniary mulcts, or corporal punishments ; for all business and imployment was esteemed the test and touchstone of their faith. It being a general tenet that in the dayes that the Messiah appears, the Jews shall become masters of the estates and inheritance of infidels, until when they are to content themselves with matters only necessary to maintain and support life.

At Salonica, where the entire community embraced the new doctrine, a common table was established and four hundred poor Jews were maintained at the cost of their richer brethren. So scrupulous were they all to observe every minute detail of the law, that, in obedience to the command to increase and multiply, some six or seven couples of children under ten are said to have been married.

At this stage, the Messiah returned in triumph from Jerusalem to his native town of Smyrna. He found a party already waiting to receive him, only anxious to wipe out the stain of his earlier ill-treatment. Only the Chief Rabbi dared to oppose Sabatai, with the result that, after a public dispute, there was a tumult in the streets, and the secular arm was called in. But the Cadi 'swallowed money on both sides, according to the custome of the Turkes,' as Rycaut

EASTERN SKETCHES

feelingly remarks; and the Rabbi was deposed, and replaced by a creature of Sabatai. The people of Israel were now definitely organised, and the kingdom created. Such opposition and scepticism as still remained were forced to keep silence, and any unfortunate unbeliever who dared to express dissent was haled before the Turks on some imaginary charge, supported by false witnesses. The Jewish community accepted as its rulers twelve 'princes' nominated by Sabatai who were to govern the march of the elect to Palestine, and each of them was required to personate some Jewish hero—David, Solomon, or Jehoiachim. Rycaut remarks of the twelve staid merchants who were lured into this extravagance, that they were 'men well known at Smyrna, who never (God knows) had ambition to aspire to the title of Princes.' But indeed, from first to last, this whole movement was not a vagary of the young, the dreamers, and enthusiasts, but a national impulse and obsession which seized the entire Jewish race, and in which the staid, and the commonplace shared with a consistency that gained force from their very limitations. They were not so much

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

idealists realising a visionary commonwealth as shrewd men of business engaging in a speculation which promised them riches and power. Sabatai had now boldly proclaimed himself 'the only and first-born Son of God, Sabatai Sevi, the Messiah and Saviour of Israel.' Every day was 'a new moon'; the whole wealthy community of Smyrna abandoned itself to a sort of perpetual pageant, and, as Rycaut puts it 'no comedy could equal the mock shewes they represented.' Sabatai went about from marriage feast to circumcision banquet; and in his path the streets were strewn with carpets, which he removed with sedulous humility. In this whirl of excitement and exultation, the miraculous was not long wanting. Even children foamed at the mouth, while strange voices proceeded from them—'effects' says Rycaut, 'of Diabolical delusions as the Jewes themselves since have confessed unto me.'

There came a stage when the people demanded a sign and a miracle; and Rycaut, who was one of the original members of the Royal Society, relates it with some critical interest. Sabatai went before the Turkish Cadi on one occasion, to voice certain griev-

EASTERN SKETCHES

ances of the Jews. The audience chamber was small, but a vast concourse of his partisans thronged the courtyard and the doorway. Suddenly it was given out that a pillar of fire had appeared between Sabatai and the judgment seat. The rumour ran through the courtyard, and surged back into the chamber ; and such were the excitement and credulity of Sabatai's partisans, that none who were actually in the room dared to doubt what so many tongues repeated. Again it was felt that, if Sabatai were the Messiah, it was proper that Elias should appear in the flesh. It was the ordinary practice of the Jews at all circumcisions to leave a vacant chair for Elias. At one of these festivals at which Sabatai was present, he solemnly bade the parents wait. After half an hour of silence, he commanded them to proceed ; and, when he afterwards explained that he had been waiting for Elias to take his seat, there was no one to doubt that the Prophet had been visibly present. After this, Elias was constantly seen, sometimes in his own person, but more often disguised as a venerable Turk. It even became a usual practice to leave the windows of all guest chambers open for Elias and a

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

plate of^{*} meat upon the table; and it usually happened that the meat had disappeared before the morning. It must have been a golden age for the cats of Smyrna.

The time was now come when, in accordance with Nathan's prediction, the Messiah should go to Constantinople to lead the Grand Turk in chains. Sabatai set out privily in a sailing vessel, but multitudes of his partisans travelled overland to meet him in the capital, where the local Jewish community expected him with unconcealed excitement. And now, for the first time, some rumour of what was happening reached the Grand Vizier, a capable statesman named Keuprili, who was then on the point of starting for Crete to urge on the siege of Candia. The Sultan (Mahomed IV) had his court in Adrianople, and, though the Turks regarded the Messianic movement with a certain tolerant contempt, it seemed risky to leave Sabatai at large in the capital when neither Sultan nor Vizier was present. The Messiah was accordingly arrested on his landing, and thrown into prison. Nothing could have suited his purpose better. Here was an immediate fulfilment of the prediction that he was to be hidden for nine

EASTERN SKETCHES

months before his final trial. While he lay in the stocks in a loathsome dungeon, the chief members of the Jewish community paid him elaborate visits of ceremony, and stood silent before him for long hours together, in attitudes of the profoundest adoration. Two months later, when the Vizier actually left for Candia, Sabatai was removed from Constantinople to a more wholesome castle at Abydos on the Dardanelles. And this again confirmed the hopes of the Jews ; for it seemed to imply that the Turks both dreaded and honoured their prisoner. Clearly they feared a riot if he remained in the capital ; and yet they used him with a new leniency. They have, as a rule, a shorter way with disturbers of the peace. The inference that Sabatai was reserved for some high destiny seemed obvious. At Abydos he reached the height of his power. Pilgrims from Poland, Germany, Venice, and Amsterdam were now arriving by hundreds daily. They had sold their possessions. They had journeyed over Europe to earn the Messiah's blessing. Their one thought was to await the imminent moment when the march to the Holy Land should begin. All the enthusiasm of Jewry

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

was camped around the lonely tower by the Dardanelles ; and after centuries of persecution and passionate expectation, the predestined hour seemed at last to have struck. It must have been a scene of burdensome pathos and intolerable exaltation. But our records tell us little of the feelings of the Jews. We are only able to catch a glimpse of Greeks and Turks in their habitual attitudes. The pilgrims were treated with unwonted consideration, for they brought a rich harvest to this abandoned spot. The Greeks doubled the price of food and lodging, and grew rich by catering for the multitude camped in the field. The Turks imposed a tariff on the visitors to Sabatai ; and all day long fees of five or ten dollars poured into the palm of the tolerant Governor of the place.

The Turkish Governor of Abydos would have been very well pleased if this profitable comedy had lasted for ever. He took care to make no record ; and, evidently, the modern system of espionage was not yet invented, for no whisper of the new developments reached the Sultan's court—a leniency which served, as Rycaut conjectures, 'as a further argument to ensnare this poor people

EASTERN SKETCHES

in the belief of their Messiah.' From his prison, Sabatai dictated a new form of worship, which was immediately adopted in all the synagogues, now decorated throughout the Levant with the letters 'S.S.,' emblazoned in gold within a crown. A special ritual was appointed for the day of Sabatai's nativity, and he was proclaimed 'The High King above all Kings of the Earth'; while an indulgence was promised to all who should pray at the grave of his mother. Miracles too were rife; but, indeed, Rycaut is right when he says, that the greatest wonder of all was that the Turks did not blackmail or massacre the entire Jewish race within their dominions.

But, as it turned out, the real danger came from within the Jewish camp itself. Among the pilgrims from Poland, there arrived a certain Nehemiah Cohen, a Rabbi whose ambitions were unbounded as his sanctity. He came, outwardly deferential; but there were reserves in his homage. He felt that Sabatai had stolen a march upon him, and been too forward in claiming a dignity to which he himself had pretensions. But he was ready to propose a compromise. Tradition taught, he said, that there should

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

be two Messiahs, the one Ben Ephraim, who should come first and endure poverty and contempt, the other Ben David, who should be the great and triumphant deliverer of Israel. He was willing to concede the position of Ben David to Sabatai ; but for himself he could not renounce his right to the thankless rôle of Ben Ephraim. It seemed a handsome offer ; and Sabatai was at first inclined to accept it. But, as the negotiations proceeded, Nehemiah complained with some bitterness that Sabatai had been too hasty in declaring himself, and urged that, as his part of the despised Messiah was clearly no agreeable sinecure, Sabatai should retire for a season, and regularise matters by allowing Ben Ephraim to be for a while the protagonist of the movement. The general feeling was that this proposal was suspicious ; and there was no great demand for an official precursor at a moment when the real pretender seemed within reach of his final triumph. Nehemiah and Sabatai came to words ; and the intruder was presently banished from the camp as a pestilent unbeliever. Sore and angry, Nehemiah determined on revenge. To Adrianople was a short

EASTERN SKETCHES

journey ; and there he denounced Sabatai as a rebel against the Sultan, and a disturber of the peace.

This was the first news that the Imperial Court had had of the Messiah ; and, as no one at headquarters shared in the stream of dollars which poured into the pockets of the provincial authorities at Abydos, a messenger was despatched in hot haste to carry Sabatai before the Sultan. The Jews had now reached what Rycaut calls 'the vertical point of all their hopes.' Thus far the prophecies of Nathan had been fulfilled to the letter. The army of pilgrims looked now for the great consummation, and expected that Sabatai would return without delay, mounted upon his 'celestial Lyon' and leading the Grand Signior in chains. That unfortunate pretender was hurried post-haste to Adrianople, and ushered, dusty and over-wrought into the presence of the Sultan. Rycaut wonders that he should have lost his nerve ; but, I, who once rode across Thessaly a prisoner on a Turkish charger, amid a clattering escort of Anatolian troopers, can understand the poor man's breakdown. When he was brought into court, he had forgotten all his Turkish—a sad declension for a prophet

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

who possessed the gift of tongues. The Sultan, in a merry vein, called out for an immediate miracle, and suggested that Sabatai should expose his naked person to the shafts of the picked archers of the guard. At this, the Messiah's courage vanished, and he stammered through his interpreter, that he was no more than 'an ordinary Rabbi and a poor Jew as others were.' It was the moment for severity. The Sultan thundered out a reminder that Sabatai had proclaimed himself King of Palestine which is a sandjak of the Ottoman Empire. As punishment for this open act of rebellion, the Sultan suggested that Sabatai should be impaled on a stake in the palace courtyard, or else embrace Islam on the spot. His final danger restored the pretender's presence of mind. With a graceful reverence he declared that he had long been waiting for a suitable opportunity to profess the only true faith, and that he felt honoured that he was enabled to do so for the first time in the presence of the Grand Signior himself.

The comedy of faith was not yet ended. The Jews, roused to the pitch of expectation, refused to believe the news from Adrianople. It was given out that Sabatai's spirit and

EASTERN SKETCHES

body had been caught up into Heaven and only his shadow bowed down in the mosque as Helen's shadow had played the wanton in Troy. The rites he had prescribed were still practised in the synagogues, the initials 'S. S.' still blazed on their walls, and only a threat of excommunication from the chief Rabbis in Constantinople availed to extinguish the heresy. As for Sabatai himself, he was now a chamberlain in the Sultan's seraglio, proud to receive religious instruction from the favourite court-preacher, a certain Vanni Effendi. The character of Vanni looms dimly through the sombre pages of Von Hammer's *History*. He seems to have been the Power behind the Throne, an eager proselytiser filled with the same Pan-Islamic dreams which flourish to-day under Izzet Bey in Yildiz Palace, His policy was, to convert the Jews and Greeks by force or fraud. Sabatai became his chosen instrument; and the Dounme of Salonica and Adrianople are the descendants of the loyal adherents who followed their Messiah even in his perversion. But Sabatai had not renounced his ambition with his creed. He still claimed Godhead in secrecy; and the Dounme, for all their

A LEVANTINE MESSIAH

outward conformity to Islam expected his return as Mahdi or Messiah. Some hint of this reached the Turks at last; and, ten years after the *Annus Mirabilis*, Sabatai died an exile in Albania. His spirit still lives in Salonica; and his dream of a Kingdom of God leavens the materialism of that dismal city.

It is a story with many morals. It was a safe, if somewhat unimaginative lesson which Rycaut's German translator drew when he closed his pirated version with this moral couplet:

Ach Ch.isten! irrt euch nicht! Lasst Narren Narren seyn;
Lasst Juden diese Welt: ihr sollt zum Himmel ein.

Perhaps this orthodox rhymster is right. The Messianic dream, by its very definiteness and its hardness of outline, does belong to 'this world.' But the persistence of this ideal, unchanged and unmodified by all the influences of commerce and Western civilization, amid the persecutions and degradations of Ghetto life, is assuredly one of the most amazing facts in the spiritual history of mankind.

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